Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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FBIS-NES-96-048 *11 March 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League Chief Discusses Violence, Peace, Water

NC0803215796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1910 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Mar (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has highlighted the Arab side's eagerness to advance the peace process in the Middle East and expressed his regret over recent acts of violence that have harmed this process. He called on all the parties concerned to exercise self-restraint, abstain from acts of violence, and focus on advancing and continuing the peace negotiations. He noted that violence breeds violence and threatens the peace process.

In an interview on the Egyptian television program "The Arab Home" broadcast tonight 'Abd-al-Majid said that all the parties, including Israel, need a fair and comprehensive peace. He expressed the Arab League's pride in President Mubarak's emphasis that the Arab League is the Arab home, noting that this stance boosts the Arab League's efforts to achieve the Arab people's hopes. He stressed that the next stage is one of challenges that require unifying joint Arab action. He said the Arab League intends to act to preserve the Arab identity and adhere to traditions and to participate actively in any efforts that concern the region. He asserted that attempts to marginalize the Arab League's role or obliterate the Arab identity will not succeed.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said the upcoming session of the Arab foreign ministers council will discuss setting up an Arab court of justice, Arab code of honor, and a mechanism for settling disputes peacefully. He voiced his hope that the foreign ministers will agree to establish an Arab court of justice during this session.

Asked whether Syria submitted a request to the Arab League regarding the water crisis with Turkey, 'Abd-al-Majid said the water issue will be on the top of the list of issues to be discussed at this session. He noted that he earlier extended an invitation to hold a tripartite meeting among Iraq, Syria, and Turkey at the Arab League headquarters to discuss the water crisis.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League Secretary Urges Protection of Peace Process

NC0903163296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1320 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Mar (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid sent messages to the U.S. secretary of state and the Russian foreign minister in their capacity as the foreign ministers of the two peace sponsors, as well as to the Italian foreign minister, whose country chairs the present session of the European Union.

In the messages, 'Abd-al-Majid underlined the need to maintain the peace process and deny violence and counterviolence the chance to impede it.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid summoned the ambassadors of the three states at noon today and presented these messages.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Envoy on Peacemakers' Summit, Crisis With Turkey

NC1003151196 Cairo MENA in English 1329 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 10 (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid today received 'Isa Darwish, Syria's ambassador to Egypt and its permanent delegate to the Arab League, to discuss the agenda of the league's council on Wednesday.

Commenting on the international peace makers conference scheduled for Wednesday, the Syrian ambassador said his country had called on the sponsors of peace, the U.S. and Russia, to resume the international peace conference of Madrid.

Damascus believes that the peace process should be examined within the framework of the Madrid conference, he added.

Asked to comment on Turkey's accusations against Syria that it was trying to block negotiations over the water crisis that involves Syria, Iraq and Turkey, the Syrian ambassador, who refuted such claims, called for the implementation of international laws in this respect.

He also welcomed the summation of a tripartite meeting to be held in a brotherly and good neighbourliness atmosphere so that each party would gain its own right.

Foreign and irrigation ministers will have to take part in this conference, as well as men of law so that the issue would be settled in its final form, and on the basis of international law and good neighbourliness, he added.

Syria refuses the accusations leveled by the Turkish ambassador to Syria on Damascus, Darwish said.

If the Turkish government desires a just solution to this water problem within the framework of international law, Syria would welcome it, he said.

The Turkish government has now been formed and Ankara has no excuse to postpone a just solution that satisfies the three parties involved, he added.

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Inter-Arab Affairs: Peninsula Shield Force Commanders Discuss Exercises

LD0903194796 Kuwait KSC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A coordination meeting to discuss the second phase of the fifth exercises of the Peninsula Shield Force was held this morning. The participants listened to reports on the tasks of the sectors taking part in the exercises, the measures and the actions that will have to be taken during the defensive operations. The meeting also discussed the unification of the system of command and communications and the training of commands on riposte actions and the tactical and administrative movements [as heard] during the defensive battle.

The meeting was attended by Staff Lieutenant General 'Ali Muhammad al-Mu'min, the chief of the Army General Staff; Flight Major General Fahd al-Amir, the deputy chief of staff; Major General 'Abdullah al-Shudukhi, the commander of the Peninsula Shield Force; Staff Major General Rashid al-Sayf, the director of the exercises; and the officers and the commanders taking part in the exercises.

Islamic Affairs

Islamic Affairs: OIC Secretariat Welcomes 'Peace Summit' in Egypt

LD1103092596 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2330 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jeddah, 10 Mar — The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Conference [OIC] welcomed the Middle East peace summit taking place in the Arab Republic of Egypt on 13 March, God willing, to ensure the continuity of and give an impetus to the peace process in all its phases according to the agreements concluded between the parties concerned, which will achieve the nationa' constant rights of the Palestinian people, establish its independent state with the capital Jerusalem, and ensure stability and security in the interest of all nations in the region.

In a statement distributed today and signed by Secretary General Dr. Hamid Algabid, the organization stressed the need for the participants to mobilize all efforts to attain just and comprehensive peace in the region.

The organization expressed a hope that the conference will constitute an important landmark, through which the international community will consecrate its commitment to providing the Palestinian National Authority with the necessary support, enhance hope among the Palestinian people, reaffirm the credibility of the peace process, and eliminate causes of tension in the region.

The organization reiterated its firm position — condemning all acts of terrorism in all its forms and sources.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Says Antiterrorism Summit 'Praiseworthy Idea'

JN0803171996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1208 GMT 8 Mar 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza from the "Today's Events" feature]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Commenting on Israeli Knesset's first reading of the bill stipulating the closure of Orient House in Jerusalem, President Yasir 'Arafat asserted that the Knesset cannot do such a thing. President 'Arafat considered this decision a violation of the agreement, pointing out that Orient House was the first Palestinian headquarters for the negotiations and it is still the main center of the Palestinian team to the multilateral talks.

President 'Arafat's statements came in response to reporters' questions following Friday prayers today.

President 'Arafat lauded the summit, which was welcomed by U.S. President Bill Clinton and which is due to be held next week. The summit will deal with combating terrorism and protecting the peace process. President 'Arafat described the summit as a good and praiseworthy idea.

With respect to combating terrorism, President 'Arafat said: There is a very important fatwa [religious ruling] issued by great men of religion in this regard. The fatwa asserts that Islam opposes violence and terrorism. [passage omitted]

On another level, the military closure imposed on the Gaza Strip by the Israeli occupation authorities since last Sunday [3 March] remains in force. Occupation authorities continue to ban workers, merchants, and humanitarian cases from using the Bayt Hanun crossing. The Qarni crossing, which is used for transporting goods, is completely closed in addition to the closure imposed on the industrial area near Bayt Hanun.

Citizens in the Gaza Strip called on the Israeli Government to lift the closure and stop the collective punishment policy practiced by the occupation authorities. Newspapers were allowed into the Gaza Strip today after being banned for several days amidst the people's criticism of these measures and practices that violate the agreements. According to economic experts, the Palestinian economy is losing $6 million daily.

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Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat, Christopher Discuss Upcoming Summit, Peace

JN0803172696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Yasir 'Arafat said the first reading of the Israeli Knesset bill on closing down Orient House in occupied Jerusalem contradicts the agreement, because Orient House is the main headquarters of the Palestinian negotiating delegation. [passage omitted]

In a related development, President 'Arafat received a telephone call from U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Talks dealt with the summit scheduled to be held shortly. The U.S. secretary stressed his country's support for the peace process and the National Authority.

President 'Arafat also received a written message from German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Confirms Participation in Antiterror Conference

JN0903070396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat announced that he will take part in the international antiterrorism conference due to be held in Sharm al-Shaykh, Egypt, on 13 March.

Palestinian Affairs: Authority To Present Ways of Combating Terrorism to Summit

JN0903145596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement to the Voice of Palestine, Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to President Yasir 'Arafat, said the Palestinian National Authority will present ways of consolidating the peace process to the international summit next Wednesday [13 March], including means of fighting terrorism directed against this process.

Abu-Rudaynah held the Israeli Government responsible for the dangers caused by the Israeli siege and closure of the Palestinian territories.

Palestinian Affairs: Cabinet Discusses Antiterrorism Summit, Israeli 'Siege'

JN0903161796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 9 Mar 96

['Adil al-Za'nun report from Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Council of Ministers convened at the Presidential Office in Gaza today under the chairmanship of President Yasir 'Arafat. The council discussed measures to confront violent actions and attacks as well as the summit conference due to be held in Sharm al-Shaykh, Egypt, next Wednesday [13 March] to confront international terrorism.

The council also discussed the effects of the military and naval siege imposed by the Israeli occupation forces on the Palestinian territories. The cabinet approved the measures adopted by the Palestinian National Security Council.

Finance Minister Muhammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi said the siege is a flagrant violation of the agreement [between Israel and the Palestinians]. He said that President 'Arafat briefed the United States and the concerned parties on the Israeli measures, which represent a blatant violation of the agreement.

Al-Nashashibi said the National Authority will present a paper to the antiterrorism summit which will include three main points. These points tackle political, economic, and security issues.

For his part, Transport Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Hajj Ahmad called for opening the crossings with the Arab countries. He emphasized that the National Authority is eager to continue the peace process and realize progress. He emphasized that substantial measures should be taken such as lifting the siege and securing job opportunities and livelihood means for the citizens. He said the siege imposed on the West Bank cities and villages is reminiscent of the occupation.

Meanwhile, the PLO Executive Committee will meet in Gaza this evening under the chairmanship of President 'Arafat.

Executive Committee Secretary Jamal al-Surani said the meeting will discuss the latest developments in light of recent attacks. The Executive Committee will also discuss continuing the implementation of the agreement, especially redeployment from the Hebron Governorate. The committee will also discuss issues related to the final status talks which include Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, borders, and prisoners. The committee will concentrate on discussing the Israeli measures and practices which violate the agreement, including the expansion of settlements and imposed military siege. The committee will also discuss calling for a Palestine National Council [PNC] meeting.

Salim al-Za'nun, acting speaker of the PNC stated that the two members of the Executive Committee 'Abd-Rahim Malluh, representative of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and Taysir Khalid, representative of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, have indicated that they are ready to attend

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the PLO Executive Committee and the meetings at the PNC speaker's office to prepare for the ordinary PNC session.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Urayqat on Antiterrorism Summit, Israeli Measures

JN1103104996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0525 GMT 11 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Sa'ib 'Urayqat, Palestinian Legislative Council member and minister of local affairs, by Fathi al-Barqawi in the Jericho studio; from the "New Day" feature—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Barqawi] Dr. 'Urayqat, good morning.

['Urayqat] Good morning to you.

[Al-Barqawi] The Sharm al-Shaykh conference will be the first international or regional conference at this level to tackle the issue of reforging peace in the region. What are the circumstances for convening this conference?

['Urayqat] It is no secret that the title of this conference, the peacemakers conference, is an attempt to salvage the peace process. Over the past days, particularly on the Palestinian-Israeli track, there is no longer a peace process, an existing agreement. This is very clear through the practices of the Israeli authorities, whether the unjustified closures, the arbitrary statements, or the barbaric measures of blowing up houses. All this shows we no longer have a peace process. Therefore, this conference comes to save the peace process, or to put it back on course, particularly that on the Palestinian track, all realize that we have not signed a peace treaty, a peace agreement. All that we have signed is a transition agreement which changes and should change daily. Our real negotiations will begin on 4 May when the real issues will be discussed; the issues of Jerusalem, settlements, the borders, and the refugees.

[Al-Barqawi] Dr. 'Urayqat, are the circumstances really propitious for the success of this conference?

['Urayqat] Let us not exaggerate or minimize the importance of this conference. But, between the lines of this summit there is a basic task, that of perpetuating the peace process.

President Yasir 'Arafat's policy in this respect is very clear. It consists of participation in this conference since it comprises the same parties which participated in the Madrid conference and an attempt to initiate the final status negotiations. If we want the peace process to continue—the prevailing circumstances no longer permit the continuation of the peace process on two levels; the transitional stage and the final status stage—all the cards of the final status negotiations should be put on the table. Let us discuss the real and political separation between the Palestinian and Israeli people; each people within its own state.

Through this conference, we should try to enter the stage of the final status negotiations as quickly as possible and in an organized manner to achieve separation, as there is no hope for the peace process if we do not quickly initiate the final status negotiations.

We heard Binyamin Netanyahu's fresh statements yesterday trying to separate the Gaza Strip from the West Bank by saying that the Gaza Strip is one thing, and that there are future plans for the West Bank. We joined the peace process on the basis that the West Bank and Gaza Strip are an indivisible geographic entity, including Jerusalem. We joined the peace process to fully implement Resolution 242 and to have the Palestinian people regain their right to self-determination.

I can say that the peace process completely collapsed last week. As you know, to close the Gaza sea, to have Gaza face starvation, and to close the West Bank cities is illogical and has nothing to do with the peace process. Israel, unilaterally exercises an arrogant policy. If the world wants the peace process to continue, then let this conference be a new springboard by having us start the final status negotiations.

[Al-Barqawi] Dr. 'Urayqat, I noticed that you spoke more than once of the resumption of the peace process and I also noticed that it seems as if Netanyahu is the only one who is hostile to the peace process in Israel. Even the Israeli Government today announced that the redeployment in Hebron will not take place as scheduled. I also believe there are doubts that the final status negotiations would begin on 4 May?

['Urayqat] Brother Fathi, I said at the beginning that in view of the Israeli measures, provocations, arrogant manner, and the barbaric measures against our people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, there is no longer a peace agreement we can speak of. I do not speak about this or that party in Israel. I mentioned Netanyahu as an example because he spoke on television yesterday about the separation of Gaza from the West Bank. This is very serious. What I want to say now is that if the world wants — this is an important international conference which will be attended by all the parties which attended the Madrid conference — this conference should be based on launching the final status negotiations as quickly as possible, that is if the world wants the peace process to continue. This is what is practically required, and this is the Palestinian policy toward this conference.

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[Al-Barqawi] Dr. 'Urayqat, you know that the National Authority did not hesitate to fight terrorism. However, the collective punishments have caused everyone of us to suffer. Do you not think that this suffering may in the future foster new episodes in the cycle of violence?

['Urayqat] I believe this is correct. It is wrong to impose collective punishments, stemming from Israel's arrogance of power, especially after our people took to the streets in spontaneous demonstrations in several cities and villages in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to say no to violence and yes to peace. The Israeli response was the imposition of collective punishments, dismemberment of the West Bank, tight sea and land closure of Gaza, and closure of international passageways. These measures show that Israel has torn up the agreements signed with it. Israel is now in a state of confusion. This is evident in its measures, practices, and provocations, which I cannot count now. What I can say, in brief, is that this conference must be a window to save the peace process, because we no longer have a peace agreement which we can speak about. We are eager to see the peace process continue. Therefore, we, the sons of the Palestinian people, and as brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] said, want to engage in the final-status negotiations. I think the world now realizes the need to save the peace process and that this has requirements. The purpose of the peace process is not a gradual end of occupation. We must begin the final status talks directly, because if Israel continues its current practices against our people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, then this will lead to one result, as I have said, which is widening the circle of violence and counterviolence.

[Al-Barqawi] In addition, the continuation of Israel's new policy will definitely reverse things.

['Urayqat] I pointed out a few days ago that there are military and political leaders in Israel who are trying to set the clock back, brushing aside all the agreements that were signed. Those leaders disregard the peace process altogether and base their actions on the arrogance of power through collective punishments. Realistically, we are now not talking about the existence of a peace agreement, because Israel said that there is no longer a peace agreement. The Israeli conduct over the past 10 days shows clearly that there are Israeli attempts, at several levels, to set the clock back and drag us into a whirlpool of violence and counterviolence, and even widening this whirlpool. This must stop now. What is required now is a true and political separation between the two peoples. I am not talking about separation the way Israel does it, the stifling practiced by Israel, by separating the West Bank from the Gaza Strip, separating the West Bank cities themselves, separating Israel from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and preventing the entry of our goods and imports, as well as our exports to Egypt and Jordan and then to the Arab world. This shows that the peace process must be rescued now. This is why we saw this international initiative, which we hope will be a window and a serious attempt to save the peace process and enter the final status negotiations.

[Al-Barqawi] I also gather from what you said that the recent Israeli practices have no link whatsoever to maintaining security.

['Urayqat] As a matter of fact, these practices have nothing to do with security. What has security got to do with citizens leaving their villages to their cities? The issue has to do with collective punishments. These are political measures intended for Israel's public opinion amid an Israeli election campaign. Our people are well aware of this. These measures have nothing to do with security. We have repeatedly said that security can only be achieved through a balanced and comprehensive peace that restores Palestinian rights, primarily establishing our independent Palestinian state. This is not a secret. This is the Palestinian position. This is the peace process we want and which the world defined when we went to the Madrid conference in 1991. We see today Israeli confusion, arrogance, and suppressive practices. I think these practices will only lead to widening the circle of violence and counterviolence and setting the clock back. This policy and this mentality must stop immediately to give the peace process the chance which it deserves.

[Al-Barqawi] I can sum up what you have said by noting that supporting the peace process should be done by going back to its initial frame of reference. Do you agree with me?

['Urayqat] I said that supporting the peace process is by expediting the implementation of its frame of reference — the final status negotiations — which must lead to political and real separation between the two peoples by establishing an independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital, alongside Israel.

[Al-Barqawi] Peace begins in Palestine and war breaks out in it. Thank you, Dr. 'Urayqat.

['Urayqat] You are welcome.

Palestinian Affairs: Islamic Jihad Figure on Antiterrorism Summit, 'Arafat

NC0903215296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 9 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with the Islamic Jihad representative in Lebanon, identified only as Abu-'Imad, in

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Lebanon, by Mahdi Hasan, in Tehran, date not given; from the "News and Reports" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hasan] Mr. Abu-'Imad, don't you think that one of the objectives of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit [antiterrorism conference] is to cover up for the Zionist enemy's domestic problems and the fact that it is reeling under the Palestinian mujahidin's repeated blows?

[Abu-'Imad] Actually, the martyrdom operations in Jerusalem, Ashqelon, and Tel Aviv demonstrate the mujahidin's ability to deal with the Israeli enemy and infiltrate the artificial borders created by the Israeli entity. Consequently, they prove this artificial entity's weakness and its inability to confront the Islamic movement in Palestine. One of the most important objectives of the summit is to rebuild Shim'on Peres' popularity which has slipped vis-a-vis the rising popularity of the Likud. We feel that whether Peres or Netanyahu are in power in this entity, either one will pursue a conspiratorial policy against the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people. We sense that the Israeli people are afraid, panicky, and terrified. It is our duty, as an Islamist movement, to strike a balance of terror with this Israeli enemy. The regional nations must sense that the weakness felt by the Israeli entity as a result of the struggler's strikes is only the beginning. There will be more successive strikes to finish off and completely destroy this entity. Consequently the nation will be in a state of renaissance and will confront the Western-U.S. scheme against the region.

[Hasan] Mr. Abu-'Imad, I understand from what you say that even if the West, the Americans, and the region's collaborators—particularly 'Arafat—hasten to embrace and protect the Zionist enemy from collapsing further and further under the mujahidin's blows, it will not do the Zionist enemy any good. What do you think?

[Abu-'Imad] 'Arafat's and his Authority's embrace of the Israeli entity. [sentence unfinished as heard] On the contrary, Israel, this usurping entity, is seeking to turn the Palestinian Authority [PA] into a tool in the Zionists' hands. The Israeli entity really has to embrace 'Arafat to defend his Authority against the Islamist movement in Palestine. 'Arafat is carrying out daily terrorism against Islamic institutions in Palestine. He is terrorizing and arresting the mujahidin and our kinsfolk. 'Arafat is totally subservient to the Zionists' will. He is a tool. One of his basic tasks is to protect the Israeli entity and prevent the mujahidin from fighting the Israeli enemy. 'Arafat today is an obedient tool in the hands of the Israeli entity, particularly Peres. 'Arafat's pursuit of the mujahidin, his persecution of the Islamist movement, and his attacks on the Islamic institutions is a basic reason why 'Arafat and the PA will pay a dear price. They will pay a price for the violations they are carrying out in cooperation with the Israeli authorities. They are desecrating the mosques, Islamic institutions, religious books, and even copies of the holy Koran. This will make some segments of our Palestinian people, who at first had been deluded about 'Arafat, revise their stand. Hence, 'Arafat will fall sooner or later just as the Shah of Iran fell. He will fall into the people's hand, God willing. What he is doing contravenes our history, civilization, and religion.

[Hasan] Thank you, 'Abu-Imad.

['Abu-Imad] God be with you.

Palestinian Affairs: PFLP-GC's Jibril Says Summit Will Not 'Scare' Resistance

JN1103132896 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1030 GMT 11 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Asked whether the Sharm al-Shaykh conference will lead to a halt of the Palestinian resistance operations or not, particularly that it represents an international declaration against resistance, Ahmad Jibril, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command [PFLP-GC] made the following statement to news agencies:

As oppressed people and forces, we believe that the countries which called for this conference and which through it want to impose their will, foremost the United States, are the countries which represent terrorism in its purest forms. The United States assumed an important role in bringing about this Zionist entity 50 years ago at the expense of dispersing the Palestinian people and the ensuing tragedies and misfortunes.

Ahmad Jibril said that many of these countries which participate in what they call the conference for combating terrorism are those which help the Zionist entity continue its occupation of the land of the Palestinian people, the Golan Heights, and southern Lebanon. These countries remained silent on the massacres perpetrated by the Zionists against our people and against the Arab people in Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt over the past decades. These countries also did nothing to persuade the Zionist entity to respect international legitimacy and UN Security Council resolutions.

Ahmad Jabril said: Did the countries participating in the Sharm al-Shaykh conference ever call on the Zionist entity to abide by Resolution 194 on the Palestinian refugees' right to repatriation? Have these countries forced the Zionist entity to implement Resolution 425 calling for the immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal from southern Lebanon?

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The countries that will meet in Sharm al-Shaykh support the Zionist occupation with every military and material means so that it can pursue its belligerency, complete the annexation of Jerusalem and the establishment of settlements in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights. Is this not terrorism against our Arab people whose right to defend themselves and their legitimate national interests with all the appropriate means is acknowledged by all the divine and objective laws, including the international legitimacy resolutions? Are not the resistance operations against the occupation which our people in occupied Palestine and southern Lebanon carry out an expression of this right? An entire generation was born and brought up watching the forces of occupation, and their repression and terrorism. That's why they aspire to liberation and the expulsion of the occupation. Oslo came and frustrated their dreams and aspirations. This made them continue to exercise their right to defend their land which is being usurped and on which settlements are being built while they watch. Those who claim that occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been removed are deceiving themselves or are trying to deceive others.

In his reply to a question on whether the Sharm al-Shaykh conference will lead to a halt of the Palestinian resistance operations or not, especially since it represents an international declaration against the resistance, Ahmad Jibril told the news agencies that our people have knocked on all doors since the 1948 tragedy seeking justice. But, when the world, particularly the Western countries which called for the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, ignored them, our people were forced to counter violence with violence to regain their legitimate rights. The U.S. administration and the Western countries which are allied to it want the Arab rulers and leaders to become petty agents who defend their interests and those of the Zionist entity. They confront every honest and militant force which rejects to become their agent under the pretext of terrorism. Is the terrorism summit not meant to besiege and starve the people, and to usurp their liberties as is taking place in the confrontation against our Arab people in Libya, Iraq, and Sudan and also against our Muslim people in Iran and against the friendly Cuban people under flimsy excuses?

These western countries, led by the United States, which claim to safeguard human rights, protect the world from wars, and encourage peace are those which raided people with their planes, killed defenseless children, women, and elderly people in the Arab homeland or outside it, like what is happening in the Caucasus and elsewhere.

These western countries that will meet in Sharm al-Shaykh are the ones that are providing the Zionist entity with a nuclear arsenal capable of destroying the entire homeland and threatening the Islamic world.

Concluding his statement to the news agencies on the Sharm al- Shaykh conference, PFLP-GC Secretary General Ahmad jibril said: We the oppressed people will continue the confrontation with all means and methods to liberate our land and defend our nation's rights. Their conferences and measures will not scare us. God willing, victory will be ours.

Palestinian Affairs: PLO Executive Committee Statement

JN1103113296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The PLO Executive Committee met in a regular session under Brother Yasir 'Arafat in Gaza on 9 and 10 March 1996. The Committee discussed topics on its agenda and decided the following:

1. To reaffirm, once again, the PLO's firm principled position — as stated by Brother President Yasir 'Arafat — denouncing terrorism and the killing of innocent people because these acts contradict our religious and human values, harm our national interests, and threaten the peace process. Violence and counter-violence will only exacerbate the feelings of hatred and animosity and serve only the forces of extremism and the enemies of peace on both the Palestinian and Israeli sides. The PLO Executive Committee values the position adopted by the masses of our Palestinian people and their national forces to denounce the acts of violence and to show adherence to the objective of peace. That position was expressed in statements, memorandums, and meetings, as well as in the recent mass demonstrations that were staged in various towns in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The PLO Executive Committee also voiced support for the measures taken by the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] to face the recent acts of terror and to pursue the forces that stand behind them.

2. To demand an immediate end to the siege imposed by the Israeli Government against our people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The PLO Executive Committee also calls on all the forces that are eager to preserve peace and human rights to demand, and to work on ending that siege. There are no justifications for these Israeli measures, which only reflect a desire to take revenge on innocent people and to punish and starve them. These measures divide the people and obstruct their daily life and interests. They also cause the majority of people to become unemployed, cause food shortages, and push the people to the edge of hunger. The events that occurred while the all-out security siege was imposed should convince Israel to reconsider

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this course; the course of collective punishment which strengthens the trends of extremism and despair and weakens the credibility of the peace process itself.

3. The PLO Executive Committee discussed the Israeli procrastination in implementing its commitments as stipulated in the agreements it signed with the Palestinians. Israel continues to pursue the policy of confiscating Palestinian territory, expanding the settlements, and building bypass roads to isolate and encircle the Palestinian towns and villages. It pursues the same policy in Arab Jerusalem, tightening its siege on the city and threatening to close the Palestinian institutions. Israel also procrastinates in implementing the agreements regarding the release of Palestinian prisoners and detainees and obstructs the building of safe corridors between the West Bank and Gaza. Israel is now looking for excuses to obstruct the redeployment from Hebron and is trying to link this redeployment to conditions that run counter to its commitment to complete the redeployment by the end of this month, March. Israel also obstructs the commitment to start the final phase negotiations, which are supposed to begin no later than early May.

Past experience has proven that this policy of procrastination neither reinforced the peace process nor protected both parties' security. What serves this process and what guarantees security and peace is abidance by what was agreed on, including abiding by the dates agreed on for holding talks on the final stage without any delay. This process is also served by constructive cooperation and positive steps to confront extremism and extremists.

The matter required international intervention, particularly on the part of the cosponsors of the peace process, to expedite the process and to achieve its goal in terms of applying Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. This alone will achieve political separation between the two sides and help each party implement the measures it is committed to in order to stop violence and to ensure security for itself and the other party.

4. The PLO Executive Committee greets the Israeli peace forces which have always stood with courage to defend the peace process based on rights and justice and to confront the enemies of peace, extremists, and their attempts to exploit the recent events to undermine and kill this process. This was proven by the recent events and investigations regarding the joint efforts of both sides' extremists.

The joint efforts of the Palestinian and Israeli peace forces can face difficulties and challenges and lead us on the only path from the whirlpool of rancor and bloodshed to the just, comprehensive, and lasting peace.

5. The PLO Executive Committee welcomed the convening of the peacemakers conference, which will be held in Sharm al-Shaykh on 13 March 1996. The Palestinian delegation, led by Brother President Yasir 'Arafat, will participate in this conference with a high sense of responsibility toward the peace process and will work to push it forward and to save it from the dangers and obstacles facing it. The Palestinian delegation will work, through full coordination with Arab brothers and world leaders, to adopt the required political measures and to mobilize international efforts to protect and expedite the peace process, implement what was agreed upon, provide the necessary economic assistance to ease the suffering of the Palestinian people — as well as to help them face the results of the siege in terms of suffocating living and economic conditions and the effects which will create an atmosphere of frustration and despair which will encourage violence and enemies of peace — and to call on the donor states to expedite the implementation of what was agreed upon in terms of commitments.

6. The PLO Executive Committee highly valued the inauguration of the elected Palestinian Legislative Council and the success of Palestinian democracy despite the siege and hard conditions under which this took place. It believes that the beginning of the work of the Legislative Council to shoulder its responsibility is part of our persistent efforts to build and entrench the institutions of the national Palestinian entity on the soil of the homeland on the path of building an independent Palestinian state, with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

7. The PLO Executive Committee has decided to call on the Palestine National Council to convene in the homeland within two months after the beginning of the work of the elected [Palestinian Legislative] Council. The Executive Committee calls on all Palestinian forces and factions to participate in this session and to assume their role and responsibilities to strengthen Palestinian national unity within the framework of the PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in the homeland and in the diaspora.

8. The PLO Executive Committee will remain in session.

Palestinian Affairs: PNC Speaker on Response to Freeze in Hebron Redeployment

TA1003131696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1030 GMT 10 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Salim al-Za'nun, acting PNC speaker, by Hasan Abu-Zayid on 10 March; place not

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given; from "With the Midday Events" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Abu-Zayid] Mr. Salim al-Za'nun, acting Palestine National Council [PNC] speaker, when will the PNC convene?

[Al-Za'nun] We have a two-month deadline after 7 March; that is, following the Legislative Council's [LC] inauguration. We are ready to convene the PNC during these two months if all PNC members are allowed to enter.

[Abu-Zayid] Mr. al-Za'nun, if Israel allows the PNC members to enter the self-rule areas in the coming days or month, will the PNC hold a meeting and cancel the articles calling for the destruction of the State of Israel?

[Al-Za'nun] This will depend on the letter of invitation and the program that the PLO Executive Committee proposes. I expect that the agenda will include the amendment of the Palestinian National Charter. Naturally, the PNC is its own master. I believe that it will find a suitable way to draw up a new system compatible with the coming stage that will contribute to the continuation of the peace process. What will most help the PNC to adopt this suitable decision, however, is an end to the recent unnatural measures: The siege of West Bank towns and villages and the difficulties that even LC members, as well as foreign guests and guests who came from abroad, faced on their way here. I believe that the situation should return to normal because the Palestinian side, headed by Yasir 'Arafat, has done what nobody else in this region has succeeded in doing: not only to reduce but to combat violence in the region.

[Abu-Zayid] But Israel is saying that this is not enough.

[Al-Za'nun] Israel says that this is not enough, but it is more than they did when they were here.

[Abu-Zayid] Mr. al-Za'nun, some people in Israel are conditioning the redeployment and withdrawal of Israeli forces from Hebron to the cancellation of the articles calling for the destruction of the State of Israel.

[Al-Za'nun] We have heard this from the media. We accept this condition, provided another condition is set beside it: namely, that before this date Israel withdraws from 70 percent of West Bank land, as stipulated by the Oslo accord, and from 30 percent of Gaza Strip land, as stipulated in Oslo 1. If conditions are set, they must be reciprocal; and if the Oslo accord is to be implemented, there must be mutual implementation. I believe that when they find out that things must be implemented by one side and not the other, the PNC members might change their minds about amending the charter until they assess the peace process and Oslo. We do not want this to happen.

[Abu-Zayid] I see that you are not optimistic about the possibility of convening the PNC and adopting the relevant decisions.

[Al-Za'nun] I am very optimistic. I believe that the Palestinian people and their representatives who come from abroad, after consulting with their brothers — the LC members from the inside; and after finding out that matters are proceeding normally as they did about two weeks ago — not as happened in the last two weeks, when there has been regression — I believe that the issue of amending the charter will not be difficult or impossible.

[Abu-Zayid] Mr. Salim al-Za'nun, PNC acting speaker, thank you very much.

[Al-Za'nun] Thank you.

Palestinian Affairs: Israeli 'Siege' To Be Lifted; Allenby Bridge To Open 11 Mar

JN1003213196 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in English 2040 GMT 10 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Let's announce this announcement which just came in: The Israeli military siege imposed on the Palestinian cities and villages by the Israeli army will be lifted starting 6 AM to 6 PM [0400-1600 GMT] tomorrow Monday, 11 March 1996. Also, al-Karamah crossing point, Allenby Bridge, will be opened both ways for arrival and departures.

Signed by Mr. Wajih al-'Attar, director general of Ministry of Civil Affairs.

Palestinian Affairs: Radio Reports Partial Lifting of Military 'Siege'

JN1103073596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli forces of occupation partially lifted the stringent military siege imposed on the West Bank at 0600 today.

According to the Israeli military decision, citizens are allowed to move freely among cities and villages in the West Bank and the stringent closure will be reimposed at 1800 today.

Wajih al-'Attari, director general at the Ministry of Civilian Affairs, said that activity at the al-Karamah crossing will continue normally both ways for travelers.

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Citizens report that the occupation soldiers at the military checkpoints are obstructing their movement and are not allowing them to pass from one city to the other.

Palestinian Affairs: Destruction of Bomber's House, Confrontations Reported

JN0803161696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] As part of the collective punishment policy, the Israeli occupation troops demolished the family home of Ra'id al-Sharnubi in the village of Burqa in Nabulus a short while ago. Three other houses surrounding al-Sharnubi's house were destroyed.

It is noteworthy that al-Sharnubi carried out the suicide attack in the occupied city of Jerusalem on Sunday [3 March]. In the meantime, confrontations are taking place between the citizens and occupation soldiers.

Palestinian Affairs: Results of Hamas, Islamic Jihad Campaign To Be Announced

NC0903203596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1925 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, 9 Mar (MENA)—Gaza Police Commander Brigadier General Ghazi al-Jibali stated that the results of the police campaign against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad will be announced in the next two days.

In an exclusive statement to MENA, al-Jibali said that several Hamas leaders in the West Bank and Gaza have been arrested or are about to be arrested in the wake of the arrest of Hamas official Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar two days ago.

He added that the Palestinian police and security agencies are doing their utmost with available capabilities to pursue extremist groups inside the areas under the Palestinian Authority's [PA] control. He said they are doing this not in compliance with Israel's demands but to safeguard the Palestinian people's security and stability.

Al-Jibali emphasized that the PA is committed by international agreements to the Palestinian people's peace. It is also committed to building an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital, he said.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Explosives, Explosive Belts,' 'Weapons' Seized

JN1003200296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prosecutor General Khalid al-Qudrah said that the Palestinian National Security Forces seized explosives, explosive belts, and weapons over the past few days.

The prosecutor general asserted that the security organs will continue to enforce the Palestinian National Security Council's pledge to maintain security and stability and to preserve the higher national interests.

Palestinian Affairs: 17th Force Seizes 'Big Amount' of Missiles, TNT

JN1103091396 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in English 2030 GMT 10 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In line with the Palestinian National Authority's efforts to crack down on terrorists, the 17th Force attacked an orchard at the al-Shuja'iyah District in Gaza and seized a big amount of firearms, rocket missiles, and TNT explosive powders.

Palestinian Affairs: Manhunt for Head of West Bank Hamas Military Network

TA1003064996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israeli and Palestinian security forces have been conducting a widespread search for Hasan Salamah of Khan Yunus, believed to be directing the network of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] terrorists in the West Bank that was responsible for the recent wave of suicide bombings. A senior Palestinian source said Salamah received military training in Syria and Sudan and was sent to the West Bank to rebuild the fundamentalist group's military infrastructure. Palestinian sources believe Salamah is hiding in the Ramallah area and is continuing his activities, raising concern for continued attacks against Israel.

Palestinian Affairs: Security Source, Newspaper Claim Arrest of Hamas Leaders

TA1003101896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A senior Palestinian security source said that his men have arrested terrorist 'Abd-al-Fatah Sutari, one of the senior leaders of Hamas' [Islamic Resistance Movement] military wing. Israel has demanded his arrest on the suspicion that he planned several terrorist attacks. The source told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that it appears that terrorist Hasan Salamah, who planned the recent suicide attacks, is hiding out in the Ramallah area.

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The newspaper AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH, which appears in the territories, reported today that the Palestinians have arrested No. 1 fugitive Muhammad Dayf, the head of the Hamas military wing. This report has not been confirmed by official sources.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Says Dayf Still at Large, Criticizes Closure

TA1003193596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Yasir 'Arafat says that in searches carried out by his men in Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] institutions, some 15,000 Israeli documents were discovered — among them approximately 2,000 identity cards. 'Arafat also said that the Palestinian Police have so far failed to apprehend Muhammad Dayf, who heads the list of fugitives submitted by Israel. 'Arafat said this to peace activist Uri Avneri, who met him in Gaza for a lengthy conversation. Avneri told our correspondent Gil Litman that 'Arafat complained about the continuation of the closure on the Gaza Strip and said the Palestinians are facing imminent hunger. 'Arafat said that if the closure continues he will personally go to the Egyptian border to bring food for his people.

Palestinian Affairs: Palestinian Police Arrest Top Hamas Official

NC0803145296 Paris AFP in English 1427 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza City, Mar (AFP)— Palestinian police on Friday [8 March] arrested Mahmud el-Zahhar, a leading member of Hamas, sources from the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) told AFP. Al-Zahhar was arrested in the early morning and taken to a Palestinian detention centre, they said.

The move comes as part of a crackdown by Palestinian police on Hamas militants after a wave of suicide bombings in Israel which have left 60 dead since February 25. Hamas said it was behind three of the bombings and the fourth on Monday in Tel Aviv was claimed by the smaller Islamic Jihad.

Under pressure from Israel and the United States, Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat has cracked down on Hamas with about 500 militants rounded up since the last bombing on Monday. Hamas offices, schools and clinics have also been raided while Hamas-led mosques have been taken under the control by the Palestinian Authority.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Reportedly Asks CIA for Aid in War on 'Terrorism'

TA1003071696 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 9 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] A secret meeting was held in Gaza today. The deputy head of the CIA's counterterrorism department conferred secretly this morning with Yasir 'Arafat. The chairman suspended the Palestinian cabinet meeting to hold the meeting and asked for U.S. aid to facilitate his war against Islamic terrorism.

Palestinian Affairs: CIA Delegation Demands 'Arafat Detain 5 Muslim Extremists

TA1003072096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A CIA delegation conferred with Yasir 'Arafat near the Erez junction today and demanded that he arrest five Muslim extremists suspected of being behind the wave of terrorist attacks in Israel.

Palestinian security sources said that 'Arafat asked the Americans for equipment to fight terrorism. The CIA delegation, headed by Deputy Director George Tenet, called on 'Arafat to detain the five extremist Muslims. One of them is probably hiding in the West Bank and the four others in the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian Affairs: Further on CIA Officials' Meeting With 'Arafat

TA1003111096

[FBIS Report] All 10 March Israeli newspapers report on a meeting between visiting CIA officials and Yasir 'Arafat in the Gaza Strip.

Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English, in a front-page pool report, writes: "Palestinian Authority [PA] leader Yasir 'Arafat has met with a delegation of senior CIA officials in Gaza, in what was thought to be an unprecedented push for collaboration against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] terrorists, Palestinian sources said.

"The hour-long, secretive meeting yesterday with the CIA, at which Palestinian security leaders also were present, was held at 'Arafat's vacation home in Bayt Hanun near the Erez checkpoint. However, officials close to 'Arafat refused to confirm or deny the meetings. 'No comment,' said Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, a senior 'Arafat adviser.

"The CIA told 'Arafat he had to arrest five key 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam figures believed to be behind the

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recent wave of suicide bomb attacks, the sources said. The American delegation was headed by deputy CIA director George Tenet, according to the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"They said 'Arafat presented the group with a list of security requests such as equipment, specially trained dogs, funds and expertise to discover explosives, as well as training in counterterrorism for the Palestinian police."

Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew publishes on page 1 a report by Yosi Torpstein and Arye Dayan which adds that "the meeting was also attended by senior Israeli security officials."

A report by Eli Bohadana and Yitzhaq Ben-Horin on page 4 of Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew says: "The Americans seek to improve the counterterrorism security measures and to begin operating in the field even prior to the international counterterrorism summit due to convene on 13 March in Egypt.

"In the meeting with 'Arafat, CIA staffers disclosed information on Hamas' connections with other organizations abroad."

The report further notes that "the encounter was a unique indication of cooperation among the CIA, the Shin Bet, and the PA Internal Security Service, aiming to defeat Hamas and sever its routes of operational financing.

"Intelligence experts believe that cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians is crucial for the success of the war on Hamas, and that the Americans will encourage the two sides to exchange information in this sensitive sphere. The CIA personnel plan to guide the Israeli and Palestinian security forces in this struggle."

Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew publishes on page 7 a report by New York-based correspondent Tzadoq Yehezqeli, which notes: "The CIA is usually considered to be very cautious in its ties with other intelligence agencies and in its readiness to share intelligence information with them, but it is now modifying its stand on the instructions of President Clinton for whom stopping the spate of Hamas terror attacks and saving the peace process are supremely important.

"The Americans will offer to share with the Israelis and Palestinians information they have gathered through their espionage satellites and most sophisticated monitoring equipment they use in the region, but they will exert heavy pressure on both parties to share their intelligence information on Hamas activities and to cooperate.

"'The Israelis and Palestinians possess good intelligence information, but there is an area in which more can be done,' said Philip Wilcox, the State Department counterterrorism coordinator."

Palestinian Affairs: PLO's Qaddumi Hails Syrian Stand, Says Oslo Accord 'Trap'

JN1103102496 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0830 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 11 Mar (SANA)—Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, has hailed the Syrian position on the peace process, describing it as a sound position that is committed to the principles on which the political process was launched.

In a statement to TISHRIN newspaper published today, Qaddumi said that the Syrian position is firm, and that Syria is eager to discuss all details and is committed to the text of the U.S. initiative that calls for an Israeli withdrawal, the restoration of the Palestinian legitimate political rights, and for recognized borders for the countries of the region. He said this withdrawal should be to the 4 June 1967 borders.

Qaddumi described the Oslo agreement as a trap, whose objective was to contain the West Bank. The agreement called for redeploying and not withdrawing the Israeli forces from the West Bank. He said: It is a march toward liquidation, and the Palestinian people can never accept it. The Palestinian people have the right to struggle with all legitimate means to restore their usurped rights regardless of the passage of time. A settlement without Palestine is not a settlement, but a limited self-rule.

He added: At this stage, the only thing that we have realized is the return of a large number of PLO cadres and departments, and receiving [word indistinct] to pay the salaries of security and police force members and other employees. In return, Jerusalem was declared the unified and eternal capital of Israel, and our negotiations took the form of demands that we present to the Israeli high commissioner.

Qaddumi concluded by saying: The main objective of the Oslo agreement is to contain the PLO by allowing its civilian and military cadres to return, taming them in the name of the alleged peace, and directing their tasks to issues that have nothing to do with the Palestine question.

Palestinian Affairs: Quray' Stresses Need To Continue Peace Process

NC1003101196 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 10 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Ahmad Quray', speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, in Gaza, by

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Muhammad al-Aswad, in Cairo, on 10 March; from the "Dialogue From Afar" Program—recorded]

[[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [al-Aswad] The PLO Executive Committee met yesterday, Saturday [9 March], for the first time and discussed several issues. What was decided about the peacemakers summit due to be held in Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday?

[Quray'] As you know, the call for this conference came from President Mubarak and President Clinton, but when opening the Legislative Council President 'Arafat also appealed for such a conference. The issue is not limited to a particular country; it has regional and international ramifications. So this issue has to be tackled by examining its causes; we should not just adopt resolutions. This issue now threatens security in the entire region and shakes its security and stability. Therefore, it must be dealt with.

As far as we are concerned, the issue is the peace process, which has almost become the root of the problem in the region, especially on the Palestinian-Israeli track. This process is highly threatened by acts committed by both sides.

When I speak of the known violence from the Palestinian side, I cannot at all play down the dangers of violence from the Israeli side—not only violence, but a series of current measures by the Israeli Government in the West Bank and Gaza. In my view, these measures have shoved aside the [Palestinian-Israeli] accord. Indeed, they have discarded the accord and restored the occupation to the West Bank and even the Gaza Strip.

These measures include a total border closure, blockade, curfew, the breaking up of the West Bank, the isolation of villages and cities, and the complete isolation of Jerusalem, where no one can enter and leaving the city is very difficult. Life has been paralyzed in the West Bank and 70,000 workers have been laid off. In addition to undermining all utilities, all services have been brought to a standstill, including cars and trucks, construction, and production. Our economy has been disrupted and thrown to the wind as a result of these Israeli measures. Therefore, I can only say that the Palestinian situation is now very serious.

[Al-Aswad] Regarding the peacemakers summit conference, an Egyptian source has emphasized that the conference will not deal solely with the attacks or explosions in Jerusalem, Ashqelon, and Tel Aviv, but with all the developments in the past few months, including the delayed implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli accord and the assassination of former Israeli Prime Minister Rabin. This confirms the comprehensiveness of the conference and explains Egypt's view of it as an effective way to back the peace process. How does the Palestinian side view the requirements of a just and viable peace with the Israeli side?

[Quray'] Actually we see nothing preventing the continuation of the peace process on the Palestinian-Israeli track. It must be resumed. Reactions to events, no matter how severe and bitter, cannot... [changes thought] they are passing incidents when compared to fundamental processes like the peace process, especially on the Palestinian-Israeli track.

It is a mistake, or rather a sin, to suspend, stall, or halt the negotiations. Israeli President Weizman said yesterday the West bank and Gaza Strip are inflammable like a haystack. We are searching for the threat; and if cannot find it, we must burn the haystack.

This is serious, very serious talk. It is unacceptable. Let us hope that the meeting in Sharm al-Shaykh will be an important one, giving impetus to the peace process, injecting new blood into it, dealing with the underlying causes, breathing life into the Syrian- Israeli track, and addressing the current causes of violence, especially in this region. [passage omitted]

[Al-Aswad] Aside from of the possible outcome of the peacemakers summit conference to be held in Sharm al-Shaykh this week to confront terrorism and consolidate the peace process, is there a Palestinian idea on how to get out of the current situation arising from the recent explosions in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Ashqelon?

[Quray'] We can only emerge from this situation if we give top priority to the peace process. The peace process must not be subject to any considerations except its continuation. If we respond to every incident of this kind, we will be rewarding the perpetrators of these acts and telling them: Yes you are right, and we will stop in response to your demands. This is what they want. So the main priority is to pursue this process and not reward violence. That is one point. The other point is that collective punishment of the Palestinian people should not be a policy to be followed every now and then. I do not believe that the Palestinian people will be able to tolerate that. I warn you that signs of frustration and despair have begun to grow among the Palestinians. If, God forbid, this happens, the issue will be very serious.

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Palestinian Affairs: 'Armed Rebellion' Threatened Over al-Rujub Dismissal

TA0903190496 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 9 Mar 96

[Studio discussion between anchor Gay Zohar and correspondent Yoram Binur — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Zohar] I understand that Jibril al-Rujub's dismissal will not be easily accepted in the West Bank.

[Binur] That is correct. I just received a telephone call from somebody who identified himself as Colonel Jihad Abu-'Asal, the commander of al-Rujub's agents in the heart of the West Bank. He said: We receive orders only from al-Rujub.

[Zohar] Does that mean a rebellion?

[Binur] That means the start of a rebellion. Most of al-Rujub's people are linked to him personally and do not just work for his intelligence organization.

[Zohar] An armed rebellion?

[Binur] It could develop into an armed rebellion. Threats have already been heard against Husayn al-Shaykh, who is meant to replace al-Rujub. I have been told by al-Rujub's men: He is a dead man if he accepts the job.

[Zohar] Will Israel gain anything from al-Rujub's dismissal?

[Binur] There is some gain. Al-Rujub harmed many collaborators and impaired the Shin Bet's ability to operate in the West Bank. His dismissal will help the Shin Bet rehabilitate its network of informers inside the autonomy. There is also a loss, however, which is that we have become used to working with the man. He knows our security people and they know him. In general, al-Rujub is a very powerful man, and that is what is needed in the territories at this time.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Reportedly Dismisses Jibril al-Rujub

JN0903162196 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1607 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat has dismissed Brigadier General [rank as heard] Jibril al-Rujub, commander of the Preventive Security Police in the West Bank. Palestinian Police sources told AFP that he was replaced by Brig. Gen. Husayn al-Shaykh.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Rujub Denies Five Bombers Waiting To Stage Attacks

TA1103082196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Colonel Jibril al-Rujub, chief of the Preventive Security Service [PSS] in the West Bank, has said that the NEWSWEEK report saying that five suicide bombers have already been issued explosives and are waiting to stage attacks is totally unfounded.

Al-Rujub told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that the terrorist Muhammad Abu-Wardah recruited only three suicide bombers, all of whom were killed in the bombings in Jerusalem and Ashqelon.

Al-Rujub further told our correspondent that the PSS knows the source of the explosives used in the bombings but said it was too early to discuss it.

Al-Rujub continues to discharge his duties as usual.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Rujub—Dismissal, Tension With 'Arafat 'All Nonsense'

TA1103105896 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 11 Mar 96 p A1

[Report on interview with Jibril al-Rujub, head of the PSS, by 'Amira Segev; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jibril al-Rujub, the head of the Preventive Security Service [PSS] in the West Bank, firmly rejects the reports of his dismissal. "It is all nonsense," al-Rujub told HA'ARETZ yesterday. "I only heard about the matter by reading the Israeli press and listening to Israeli radio."

Al-Rujub also denied the reports that at their meeting on 9 March, Palestinian Authority [PA] Chairman Yasir 'Arafat scolded him for showing a lenient attitude toward Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. "That is simply not true," al-Rujub said, adding: "just ask Chairman 'Arafat himself. He has all the answers."

[HA'ARETZ] Did you speak with 'Arafat today?

[Al-Rujub] Sure. I have no problem with 'Arafat. What are you talking about?

[HA'ARETZ] 'Arafat is saying nothing about the matter. Nor has he issued an official announcement.

[Al-Rujub] Because there is nothing to announce.

[HA'ARETZ] Do you think he was intimidated by threats of rebellion?

[Al-Rujub] No, get out of here. I am continuing to work as usual. [end al-Rujub]

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We asked Al-Rujub whether his men, who declare that they work with him and not with the PA, would follow the orders of another commander. Al-Rujub replied: "That is really an interesting quandary for those people who do not like me, because my people do."

[HA'ARETZ] There were reports in Israel that the Shin Bet sought your dismissal because you are destroying its network of collaborators.

[Al-Rujub] I do not believe that is true. In principle, I find it hard to believe that the Shin Bet or the Israelis are involved in such matters or are capable of asking for my dismissal.

[HA'ARETZ] Have your ties with the Shin Bet been harmed?

[Al-Rujub] I do not think so.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Qassam Brigades Pledge Continued 'Jihad' Operations

TA0803155296 Jerusalem JMCC PRESS SERVICE in English 1455 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Hamas' [Islamic Resistance Movement] military branch, 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigades Central Command, issued a statement yesterday, 7 March, annulling all previous statements that came out in its name. "We were surprised with the series of contradictory and forged statements that come out in the name of our Mujahidin brigades," the statement said. Following are excerpts of the statement:

We declare that... there is no relation to the Brigades leadership with the previous statements and the mentioned statement (statement signed by the wanted Brigades in the Gaza Strip).(...)

We declare to our Mujahidin people and nation that we will not stop our jihad; our operations will continue against the occupying Jews of our land until our goals of victory and return are achieved.

We declare to the whole world that we are proud of what our heroic Mujahidin had accomplished because it is a legitimate right to defend our right in our homeland and holy land; the threatening and condemnation rhetoric and the international media will not stop us from continuing to follow the enemy and striking all its aims in our occupied homeland.

Let the Jewish enemy know it is not safe from the strikes of our Mujahidin despite the Nazi campaign it is launching against our innocent people. For organized killing, siege, starvation, nor house demolitions and sealing will frighten our Mujahidin, who will, with God's will, keep fire on the necks of the Jewish terror leaders (...)

[Signed] 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigades Central Leadership Jerusalem, 7 March 1996

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Seeks Muslim Brotherhood Mediation With Hamas

NC0803182496 Cairo SABAH AL-KHAYR in Arabic 7 Mar 96 p 6

[Report by Rida Hammud]

[FBIS Translated Text] During his visit to Cairo last week Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat met secretly with Ahmad Sayf al-Islam Hasan al-Banna, secretary general of the Bar Association and son of Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the banned Muslim Brotherhood. 'Arafat asked al-Banna to mediate with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] to stop its attacks on the Israelis inside the occupied territories, especially following the huge explosions that Hamas staged last Sunday [3 March].

This meeting between 'Arafat and al-Banna was not the first. They met a few months ago, when 'Arafat made a similar request. The previous meeting took place at the Muslim Brotherhood center in al-Tawfiqiyah before it was closed down by the prosecution. The two sides failed to reach an agreement because al-Banna said that Hamas is an independent organization.

The Palestinian president made a lightning visit to Cairo on Wednesday [28 February], when he met President Husni Mubarak. Their talks dealt with Israel's intransigent measures in the Palestinian self-rule areas following the explosions in Jerusalem and Ashqelon.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Representative in Iran Discusses Developments

NC0903055596 London MBC Television in Arabic 2100 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement to the MBC, Abu-Hamdan, the Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement representative in Iran, stressed that the next stage may witness some fierceness and severity. He said it is not in the interest of the Palestinian Authority [PA] to clash with Hamas at a time when Hamas is exercising self-restraint. Our correspondent in Tehran, Fadi Isma'il, conducted the interview:

[Begin recording] [Abu-Hamdan] We believe the next stage will be an extension of the current one. There may be some fierceness and severity. Certainly there will be some suffering. But this suffering is expected and calculated.

[Isma'il] The Palestinian security agencies are carrying out an arrest campaign and raiding the homes of Hamas

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supporters. If this escalates will it lead to a confrontation and response by Hamas?

[Abu-Hamdan] We believe it is not in the interest of the PA to attack the Hamas Movement, clash with it, or assault its members. But we will try to exercise as much self-restraint as we can. As you may know, some people might be unable to exercise self-restraint indefinitely and others might not get along with it. In this case we believe the PA is primarily responsible.

[Isma'il] Western media and Israel accuse Iran of supporting Hamas and of being behind these operations. How would you answer this?

[Abu-Hamdan] The Hamas Movement, as part of its understanding of the nature of the conflict with the occupation authorities, seeks to establish ties and hold dialogue with all the Arab, regional, Islamic, and international parties. Hamas' relations with Iran are within this framework and are like its relations with other countries in the region, in Europe, and elsewhere. We have stressed that the relations are of a political nature and the Hamas bureau here is the same as other bureaus in other countries. I do not know why people focus on this bureau and not others. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Not To Hand Over Arms, Halt Attacks on Israel

NC0903112096 Paris AFP in English 0956 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, March 9 (AFP) — The radical Palestinian group Hamas will not hand over its weapons or halt anti-Israeli attacks, the movement's representative in Lebanon said Saturday [9 March], dismissing as fakes earlier statements to the contrary.

However, he added that the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) was ready to close its offices in Lebanon if the government in Beirut asked it to. The United States asked Arab countries, namely Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, to close Hamas offices.

"We hope that Lebanon and the Arab countries will not bow to Zionist and American pressure. But if the Lebanese Government asked us to (close our offices) close them we will do so," Mustafa al-Liddawi said. He said "Hamas will not turn in its weapons. The Brigades of Martyr 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam have not issued statements saying this," referring to the group's military wing.

"It is the Palestinian Authority which issued these statements," he told the Lebanese daily AL-NAHAR. "Military action and suicide operations are part of our strategy to liberate our land," he said, adding that there was no split between the movement's political and military branches.

A statement attributed to 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam military wing in the West Bank agreed Tuesday to heed a call from the movement's political leaders to stop all attacks on Israel. But it was not signed by the unit called "Martyrs of Yahya 'Ayyash" which claimed three of the four suicide attacks in Israel since February 25 which left 60 dead.

Another group, the Islamic Jihad, claimed responsibility for the fourth suicide bombing Monday in Tel Aviv that killed 13 people. 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam also announced Wednesday from the Gaza Strip that it would surrender its arms and explosives to Yasir 'Arafat's Palestinian Authority. Al-Liddawi also charged: "There is close collaboration between the Palestinian police and Israel, and without information provided by the Palestinian police to Israeli services, the assassinations of (Hamas militants) Kamal Kuhayl and Yahya 'Ayyash would not have taken place." He condemned a planned anti-terrorism summit in Egypt next week and said the suicide bombings in Israel had "international legitimacy because we are fighting to liberate our land."

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Official Discusses Attacks on Israel

NC0903141296 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 4 Mar 96 pp 40-41

[Interview with Mustafa al-Liddawi, Hamas representative in Lebanon, by Zaynab Farran; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Farran] Can we say that the two suicide operations [in Jerusalem and Ashqelon on 25 February] show that the radicals now have the upper hand in Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]? Some Hamas officials (Muhammad Dayf and 'Abd-al-Fattah al-Sawtari) announced earlier that the Palestinian Authority [PA] and the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions had signed a security agreement.

[Al-Liddawi] It is untrue that any agreement was signed between the PA and 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions to stop military operations, as the PA claimed a few days ago when it said that meetings between PA security bodies and al-Qassam Battalions had resulted in an agreement under which the latter undertakes to stop its military operations provided the PA protects its members from Israeli pursuit and assassination.

We believe this rumor is part of a scheme by the Palestinian and Israeli authorities to create confusion and differences within Hamas. Hamas does not trust any official Palestinian body, and certainly not the security

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services, which are closely linked to the Israeli security agencies. The movement believes that the Palestinian Security Services are behind the murder of most of its military cadres in the West Bank and Gaza, including Kamal Kuhayl and Yahya 'Ayyash. The two operations prove beyond any doubt that there is no agreement or truce between Hamas and the PA, and that there are no differences within the movement.

Some meetings are being held with the PA to defuse tension between the two sides and to solve some problems and obstacles the movement is facing under the self-rule authority, but they are not being held on the basis of the Oslo Agreement because we do not want to lend it legitimacy. For example, meetings are held to make sure that jobs are given out not on the basis of political favoritism, but on the basis of competence. The practice of political favoritism left all our elements without jobs. We also demand that the PA grant public freedoms and so on.

[Farran] At the Cairo meeting, Hamas agreed not to embarrass the PA in front of the world. Do your military operations not embarrass the PA?

[Al-Liddawi] We said we would not embarrass the PA during the elections so that things would proceed calmly. We committed ourselves to that. But we do not consider our operations deep inside the territories occupied in 1948 and in Jerusalem, areas that are outside 'Arafat's control, an embarrassment to the PA. We believe the contrary: The Zionist enemy is embarrassing the PA by its military operations in the self-rule areas, such as killing 'Ayyash and other mujahidin; assassinating Fathi al-Shaqaqi, former secretary general of the Islamic Jihad, in Malta; and constantly closing the West Bank and Gaza.

It is these Zionist practices and measures that harm the Palestinians. (Since 'Arafat's authority was established, the Palestinian police have killed 23 Palestinians and the Israeli forces have killed 11 Palestinians in the self-rule areas.) And yet the PA has not complained of the enemy activity. At the same time, the PA is engaged in oppressive measures that are angering ordinary Palestinians, notably the 'Arafat police's killing of Brothers al-'A'raj and al-Razaynah from the Islamic Jihad, who were wanted by the Israeli authorities.

In short, our operations are not as embarrassing to the PA as the enemy practices are embarrassing to the PA and to us. But when all is said and done, for us things are not gauged by whether they are embarrassing or not. We are looking at the Palestinian cause in its entirety under the Oslo agreement, now and for many years to come. Embarrassment therefore will not obstruct Hamas' strategy of armed jihad acts, as this strategy will protect the Palestinian cause — the people and land — from loss and division. Embarrassment is a passing, temporary thing, while nationalism is the important thing.

[Farran] Do you expect an escalation of the violence against your movement by Israel and the PA?

[Al-Liddawi] The movement expects its cadres to be the target of a large-scale detention campaign by the enemy and the PA. After the telephone conversation between Peres and 'Arafat, and after Peres presented names and data to 'Arafat concerning wanted mujahidin, 'Arafat pledged to curb the opposition and infiltrate its infrastructure. Within only 24 hours of the operations, more than 50 Hamas activists were arrested in Gaza alone. The movement had expected this reaction and took it into its calculations. We do not believe it will prevent us from proceeding with our struggle.

[Farran] Is there any coordination between Hamas and the Islamic Jihad? Have Islamic Jihad members participated in any military operations of Hamas?

[Al-Liddawi] Coordination with the Islamic Jihad proceeds from a firm Hamas policy at home and abroad. The movement believes in the opposition closing ranks irrespective of different affiliations and ideologies. Hence, Hamas' membership in the Palestinian Forces Alliance. So it is even more logical for Hamas to coordinate and ally itself with the Islamic Jihad, which, together with Hamas, is operating efficiently inside the homeland.

Hamas aspires to the highest level of coordination and agreement with the Islamic Jihad at all levels — military, political, and others — inside and outside the homeland.

[Farran] Let us go back to the embarrassment. Do you believe that the embarrassment of 'Arafat will make him abandon the Oslo Accord or will it make Israel abandon him and the Oslo Accord?

[Al-Liddawi] We do not believe that the Zionist enemy will forsake the PA now ruling in the self-rule areas in the foreseeable future, because the PA has alleviated most of the Zionist enemy's problems in keeping track of the strugglers and in protecting Israeli lives and property without the Israeli authorities suffering any losses in implementing their policy in the areas they control.

Moreover, we notice stepped-up coordination between the PA and various Israel security agencies to achieve Israeli goals.

The Israelis signed the Oslo Accord only when they became sure that it would bring them security and

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safety, ease their burden in administering the territories, and improve their image, which was tarnished before the international community during the intifadah years.

Therefore, we do not expect the enemy to be forced to retreat from the Oslo Accord as long as it gets them the privileges they want with a Palestinian Authority like this. This is especially true because Peres understands well this Authority's stand toward the opposition. He is satisfied with the Authority's stands and efforts to control the opposition in light of their existing ties.

However, if the enemy feels that his human losses are greater under the Oslo Accord than they were before, then the whole Oslo plan is likely to hit a snag. But Israel's embarrassment of 'Arafat is not the point and 'Arafat is not concerned about the anger of the Palestinian man in the street.

[Farran] Israel is on the threshold of elections and your operations serve the radical and extremist trend in that entity. What is the Palestinians' interest in this? 'Arafat has claimed that contacts have been made between you and some right-wing Israeli parties who provide you with Israeli cards to enter and move around in territories banned to Palestinians.

[Al-Liddawi] We are not interested in serving Israeli parties, extremist or moderate. We are not a card in the Zionist electoral scene, nor do we have any candidate, be he from the Labor Party or the Likud Party, unlike the PA.

[Farran] But numerous Palestinian figures in the 1948 territories and Gaza known for their Islamic leanings condemned the two operations, according to a poll conducted afterward. What do you think of that?

[Al-Liddawi] In light of the occupation and the repressive measures it and the PA take, no one can properly express his views without fear. This is because freedom of thought and expression is nonexistent in all the Palestinian territories, including those under the self-rule Authority.

A newspaper chief editor was detained just because he did not place 'Arafat's picture on the front page. Employees of the Human Rights Society have been arrested simply because it disclosed the oppressive measures to which the Palestinian citizens were being subjected by 'Arafat's police. So what do you think happens to ordinary citizens?

[Farran] Do you expect more popular consent to this action? In your view, will future circumstances allow you to pursue this path?

[Al-Liddawi] No doubt the Oslo plan has finished its first round, the part that is acceptable to people. This is because in this phase, Israeli soldiers withdrew from some territories, ensuring some formal privileges for the PA and giving the people hope for the future by providing some degree of independence and freedom. This, in turn, led to some people deciding that armed struggle and its results are futile.

Regardless of who entertains this idea, we leave it to time and events to clearly reveal the facts for them. In three months, that is in May, hotter issues which form the real core of the future of the Oslo plan—such as the fate of Jerusalem, settlements, borders, sovereignty, refugees, and water—will be discussed.

We expect Israel not to offer any concessions in the PA's favor in any of the aforementioned issues. This will strip it of any legitimacy or popular support that it gained in the first phase. This assumes that the Labor Party will rule during the Israeli entity's next term of office.

That party has offered no concessions. So what will the situation be like if the Likud, led by Netanyahu who has not recognized the Oslo Accord but agreed to deal with it an established fact, takes power?

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Announces Resumption of Operations Against Israel

JN1003072896 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0700 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement issued yesterday, the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions, the military wing of Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement, announced the resumption of suicide operations against Israel. The statement criticized the planned international summit in Egypt, considering it a desperate attempt to rescue the Zionists and an international plot to end the jihad and resistance put up by the Palestinian people. The statement added that the self-rule authority went too far in its attacks on Hamas and called on Yasir 'Arafat to stop oppression against the movement.

Palestinian Affairs: PPS Contacts With 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Reported

TA1003120296 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 10 Mar 96 pp A1, A13

[Report by Ze'ev Schiff]

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the first explosion of the No. 18 bus in Jerusalem, the Palestinian Preventive Security [PPS] in the Gaza Strip, headed by Muhammad Dahlan, conducted negotiations with the group responsible for the latest suicide attacks but did not manage to convince it to stop the attacks. The negotiations were

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with 'Arafat's knowledge, and despite them, the group's members have not yet been caught.

The negotiations between the Palestinian Authority [PA] and representatives of 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam, Hamas' [Islamic Resistance Movement] military wing, began even before the last wave of attacks. They were accelerated when the PPS learned that the organization was going to perpetrate large-scale terrorist attacks to avenge the killing of Yahya 'Ayyash, "The Engineer." The PA representatives tried to convince the military wing's leaders to put off the attacks, at least until after the elections in Israel, but the negotiations, in fact, failed even before 25 February, when the first attack on Jerusalem's No. 18 bus and on the Ashqelon hitchhiking station took place, because members of the military wing in the Gaza Strip refused to refrain from perpetrating an attack soon.

The PA then knew that a spectacular attack was expected in Israel, but it is not known whether they relayed this information to the Israeli security services, nor were any preventive detentions carried out among members of Hamas' military wing. Following the first explosion in Jerusalem, 'Arafat told a foreign diplomat who came to see him about the attack that there would be no more attacks because "the revenge for 'Ayyash's killing has been settled."

After the explosion of the first bus in Jerusalem and the attack on the Ashqelon hitchhiking station, contacts between the PPS in the Gaza Strip and the military wing, under the leadership of Muhammad Dayf, resumed. Dayf had been known to Dahlan for years, and the two even met in the Israeli jail.

Dahlan himself recently met with Dayf and his people. Some of the meetings were held at the PPS offices in Gaza, but those meetings were also to no avail.

All contacts were held with 'Arafat's knowledge and upon his instructions. He knew that the source of the latest suicide attacks was in the Gaza Strip, but he nevertheless took the trouble, all along, to say that their source was elsewhere. It is for this reason, too, that leaflets were falsified in the Gaza Strip, written by Hamas' military wing as it were. It is only after the second explosion in Jerusalem, on 3 March, that 'Arafat announced the outlawing of 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam.

At this stage, instructions were also given to conduct extensive detentions, but the representatives who held the negotiations on behalf of 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam, namely, some of the leaders of the military wing, were not among the detainees. Detained instead were many of Hamas' social and political activists, who are not considered a real danger by the Israeli security services.

The assessment is that 'Arafat has refrained until this very moment from a real confrontation with members of Hamas' military wing. One of the reports says that the PPS proposed to Muhammad Dayf and several of the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam that they leave the Gaza Strip for one of the Arab states, thus avoiding detention or harm by Israel.

Palestinian Affairs: Envoy to Arab League Blames Israel for Recent Violence

NC0803220496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1930 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Mar (MENA) Muhammad Subayh, Palestinian delegate to the Arab League, has blamed Israel for the recent incidents in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. He said that blaming the Palestinian Authority [PA] is unacceptable. In an interview on the Egyptian television program "The Arab Home" he said: Those who carried out the suicide operations in Israel came from Hebron, which is under Israeli control, so why make excuses and blame the Palestinian people. He called on the Israeli authorities to implement the peace agreement in letter and spirit, because this is the only way to defuse tension and violence in the region.

Subayh said the PA is maintaining security in the areas under its control. He said that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] committed itself during the talks with the PA in Cairo in December not to carry out any operations from inside the Palestinian Authority area. He noted that talks were under way with Hamas on turning the movement into a political party but, regrettably, the Israelis carried out assassinations on Palestinian territory, killing Kamal Kahil and Yahya 'Ayyash and so provoked others.

Subayh stressed the PA's categorical rejection of violence by any party, noting that 'Arafat and the Palestinian people condemn such acts, but said the parties must search for the causes. He noted Israeli practices in Jerusalem and the self-rule areas, sealing off all the PA's areas, starving the people, destroying the Palestinian economy, and closing Jerusalem to the congregation. He said these actions represent unacceptable provocation. He recalled the Hebron al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre, which left many Palestinians dead, noting that at the time Israel said the perpetrator was mentally unbalanced and the incident was isolated. He said the isolated incident was perpetrated by a major in the Israeli army, Baruch Goldstein. He noted that many Israelis carry arms day and night.

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Palestinian Affairs: Sha'th on Israeli Measures, PNC Meeting

NC0903185296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1500 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Mar (MENA)—Dr. Nabil Sha'th, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council [PLC], praised the role President Husni Mubarak is playing in support of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and of the negotiations process and everything that serves the interests of the Palestinians.

In a telephone interview with MENA today, Dr. Sha'th said that Egypt's participation in the inauguration of the first Palestinian legislative council in Gaza last Thursday [7 March] with a big political and parliamentary delegation led by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa was very significant and highly appreciated.

Sha'th regretted the collective punishment and the siege Israel is imposing on the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza because of the recent acts of violence. He remarked that the Israeli siege is in practice a reoccupation of the West Bank. He referred to the constant threat to storm Gaza, reinstate the policy of blowing up homes, and return to the occupation practices in their ugliest form.

The Palestinian official said that the determination to convene the first PLC in the history of the Palestinian people last Thursday with the participation of Arab and world delegations in spite of everything reflected the determination to continue the peace process to restore the Palestinian people's rights and to establish democracy and embark on reconstruction. He added that the event reflected the profound links tying Palestine with its neighbors, particularly Egypt.

Regarding circumstances surrounding the convocation of the Palestine National Council [PNC] to amend the disputed items in the Palestinian charter, Dr. Sha'th said that the PNC is scheduled to convene two months after the first session of the PLC. He said that the Palestinian Authority [PA] will invite the PNC to a meeting.

He called on Israel to allow all PNC members to enter the Palestinian territories, pointing out that Israel has not permitted all the members to enter.

Sha'th called on Israel to honor its promises so that the PNC meeting can be held in Gaza within two months.

Sha'th was asked about the amendment of some articles in the Palestinian Charter. He said that some articles urge the liquidation of Israel and that there is a pledge to amend them on the basis of the mutual recognition between the PLO and Israel in the Taba agreement, and because the Palestinians are party to a peace process.

Asked about the program of the PLC in the coming stage, he said that the PLC is scheduled to work along three lines. The first is to ratify and develop the existing legislations and laws, the second is to monitor the PA and follow up on citizens' problems, and the third is to put the peace process in order and back the Palestinian negotiators and monitor their performance.

The Palestinian official talked about the PA's role in confronting the Israeli media campaign in the wake of the recent terrorist incidents. He said: The bloody incidents in Jerusalem, Ashqelon, and Tel Aviv are indeed regrettable. But when such operations occur, the entire world recollects its old sense of guilt which in the past gave Israel the opportunity to be heard. We are, meanwhile, denied that, and our ability to be heard is being restricted.

Sha'th added that there is a big difference between security and mass punishment, referring to Israel's current siege of the West Bank and Gaza, something that is banned by all international laws. He noted that mass punishment is a kind of racism, particularly considering that the recent operations did not proceed from the territories under Palestinian control. He pointed out that Palestinian security men had no responsibility for these operations, in which Israeli, Arab, and external international parties are involved. He added: It has transpired that the explosives, clothes, and the identity cards used in the Tel Aviv incident were Israeli, and this can be verified.

Regarding the contradiction in Israeli words and deeds, as demonstrated by its call for the amendment of the Palestinian Covenant and at the same time its refusal to let PNC members enter the Palestinian territories, Sha'th said that unless all PNC members except those who excuse themselves arrive, the council cannot be convened and, accordingly, what Israel wants will not be attained. He added that the PNC must convene in full freedom and democracy to determine where the Palestinian interests lie.

Sha'th described the current [Israeli] channels of communications with the PA following the recent incidents as weak, adding that contacts are held off camera with some Israeli parties. He added: The Israelis are the ones who suspended all negotiations. Their decision is partly in response to a public demand. It also demonstrates a return to an earlier practice still favored by some of their leaders, he added.

Regarding the final status agreement, Sha'th said that it means international borders for the Palestinians, adding

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that the Israelis have violated 99 percent of the interim agreement under the excuse of security. He pointed out that for one and a half years, since the start of the PA's control of Gaza, the crossing point for goods coming from Egypt has been closed. When they let goods pass, they cite security as an excuse for not being able to search more than 8 or 10 trucks a day, something that may cause goods aboard the trucks to spoil. He noted that the original agreement allows for the passage into Gaza of 150 trucks a day, but they let only eight trucks to pass from Egypt while approximately 2,400 trucks pass from Israel. This means an economic siege of the Palestinian people and an attempt to isolate the territories, as is the case in crossings between Gaza and the West Bank. He added: For instance, the Israelis permit West Bankers to travel to Tel Aviv and Dimona, but not to Gaza. This is an attempt to disengage the Palestinian territories, and proof of this is the occupation authorities' persecution of the Gaza citizens, he added. He noted that the Gaza students in West Bank universities are rounded up and expelled to Gaza for security reasons, which means keeping the Palestinians under siege.

Sha'th accused Israel of forcing the Palestinians to buy Israeli goods, the worst that Israel produces, worth $2.2 billion a year. He added: Because of the aid restrictions, we are compelled to buy from them and we have no other choice. During the intifadah days, we used to buy goods worth $1.2 billion a year. We could buy half the necessities of the Palestinian people from Egypt if we were allowed to, because the Egyptian goods are cheaper and of better quality.

Sha'th concluded by saying that the purpose of this Israeli pressure is to consecrate the economic hegemony and monopoly, which also involves a political hegemony, for domination purposes.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Husayni: Knesset Voting on Orient House Bill 'Unwise'

JN0803180196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1227 GMT 8 Mar 96

[Interview with Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of the Jerusalem file, by an unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of the Jerusalem file, what do you have to say about the Israeli Knesset's endorsement of the first reading of the draft bill on closing Orient House in occupied Jerusalem?

[Al-Husayni] This is an unwise decision and indicates the state of confusion the Israelis are experiencing these days. These are truly difficult days for them. Despite this, I believe that they should have been wiser. At any rate, this is a first reading which will be followed by a second and a third reading. This second reading is expected to take place after the elections.

[Correspondent] Abu-al-'Abd [al-Husayni], do you expect it will be endorsed after the second reading?

[Al-Husayni] No, I do not think so, because this decision is strange. As you know, even voting on this bill was 49 in favor and 36 against. This means that voting did not take place in the presence of all Knesset members.

[Correspondent] Faysal al-Husayni, the Oslo agreement prevents Israel from encroaching on the existing institutions in Jerusalem. So, how would the Israeli Government justify this?

[Al-Husayni] As I told you, the current actions against the Palestinian institutions, the Palestinian people, the Palestinian officials, and all the agreements which were signed between us and them all conflict with the Oslo agreement. Asking Gaza students to leave the West Bank conflicts with the letter and spirit of the agreement.

[Correspondent] What is the Palestinian response to this?

[Al-Husayni] I believe that there should be a Palestinian response, and I think that responses are being prepared. However, we know full well that the other party is almost without logic at this particular time. A few days ago, I had talks with a foreign representative who asked me not to talk with them [the Israelis] about logic because logic is missing, and their actions are illogical, and that we should wait until this situation ends.

[Correspondent] But these violations have become part of the Israeli Government's policy?

[Al-Husayni] We hope that this will not be the case, and that the Palestinian contacts, whether with the Israelis or with other Arab or foreign officials, will lead to ending this situation and these approaches which will destroy any peaceful life in the future.

[Correspondent] Thank you Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of the Jerusalem file.

[Al-Husayni] You are welcome.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: Beilin, Sha'th on Peace, Fighting Hamas

TA0803221896 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 8 Mar 96

[Interview with Israeli Minister Yosi Beilin, in the Jerusalem studio, and PA Planning Minister Nabil

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Sha'th, in Gaza, by Gadi Sukenik and 'Imanu'el Rosen — live; in Hebrew, with Sha'th speaking in English]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Sukenik] Yosi Beilin, your colleague Ehud Baraq a few hours ago threatened Yasir 'Arafat by saying on the radio: This is your last chance; you have several days to act. If you do not act, we will go in and do it for you. Would you use the same language?

[Beilin] First, I did not hear Ehud actually say that, and I think that the tone is very important. There is no doubt that the process is facing a very difficult moment. I am sure that we and the Palestinian Authority [PA] will overcome it. There is no doubt that the PA is currently doing things it has never done before in its struggle against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] because in the past it believed it could create some way to live....

[Rosen, interrupting] You say you do not like the threatening tone, if I understand you correctly.

[Beilin] I think that effective pressure can be brought to bear on the PA, and we have done it. I am not sure that we should threaten, but it is obvious that there is a feeling that if things are not done then it will not be possible to continue along the same path and that changes will have to be introduced.

[Sukenik] Dr. Sha'th, we were told that the PA will deal with terrorism more effectively than the Israeli Government. Did you fail?

[Sha'th] Obviously, if we want to work together and cooperate, since we are partners in this peace process, the PA must be supported and helped, and I am sure it can do a much better job because it has the approval now of the Palestinian public to do this job. It does not act as an occupier, and there is no resistance to its authority now. I think we have the full support of our public, and therefore we should be supported to do the job ourselves and not to get Israelis to reoccupy the territories.

[Sukenik] Why do you have that support only now? Why did you not act to prevent terrorist attacks like we had in the past two weeks?

[Sha'th] When I say now I mean particularly after the massacres we have seen in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, but we have been doing this over the last year and a half, except that the last seven months we really tried to get it through a dialogue and through negotiations. We were able to stop for seven months all of these actions, and this was totally coordinated and communicated to the Israeli Government. When we saw that we failed in the dialogue, we went back to the harshest of measures.

[Rosen] Mr. Sha'th, can you say today that Yasir 'Arafat is emotionally prepared for what might in the coming days develop into a Palestinian civil war?

[Sha'th] We do not want a civil war, and we will not have a civil war. I think the important thing is the Palestinian public now sees that the Palestinian dream cannot be protected unless we really stamp out all force and all terrorism, and that is where his real strength lies. We will never have a civil war.

[Sukenik] Mr. Beilin, you saw 'Arafat during that entire period. Even if he moved in the direction of peace, you saw that he did not preach peace and that he attended a memorial service for Yahya 'Ayyash, the Engineer. Why were you silent?

[Beilin] First, we were not silent. Second, there is no doubt that throughout that period 'Arafat tried to walk between the raindrops: on the one hand, to implement the agreement with us and meet our main demands, including hitting terrorists who tried to infiltrate into Israel; and on the other, trying to appease the Hamas leadership and reach an agreement with it. What we now say is: No, you cannot go on like that because you failed. Dr. Sha'th's remarks confirm that.

[Sukenik] Dr. Sha'th, what do you think will happen to the region in general and the PA specifically if a Likud government — which is now a reasonable possibility — comes to power?

[Sha'th] In the final analysis it is the choice of the Israeli people what kind of government they have, and there is nothing we can do to affect that situation, but of course, it is not going to be that easy. We remember that when Mr. Shamir was the prime minister of Israel, in effect he went to Madrid kicking and screaming. He did not go very willingly, and he declared later that he was going to negotiate for 10 years and achieve no results. Therefore, our experience with Likud is rather mixed. Now, I am sure they will be respecting the agreements that the Labor Party has done in the name of Israel, but it is not going to be easy.

[Rosen] Yes, but Nabil Sha'th, you did not make it easy on Labor and Shim'on Peres, to make an understatement. Can you say tonight that it was a mistake, perhaps a serious mistake, by 'Arafat to attend a memorial service for Yahya 'Ayyash and praise the death of the martyr there?

[Sha'th] I think there was a lot of exaggeration of what happened. 'Ayyash was a very difficult case for us because he was assassinated during the time that Hamas had respected the cease- fire, and we had an assurance that while they respect the cease- fire, none of them would be hurt. Therefore, it was like a breach of

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confidence on our part. I think that is why Mr. 'Arafat went to his memorial ceremony, but in no way did he want to make any symbol of such suggesting or supporting the terrorist activities or 'Ayyash or of any other person. It was a difficult moment.

[Sukenik] We switch to a poll we conducted at mid-week following the terrorist attacks. Binyamin Netanyahu and Shim'on Peres are tied at 49 percent. Dr. Sha'th, what do you say about the tie?

[Sha'th] I think in this sense, overall Mr. Peres has been an honest man trying his best to get this peace for the Palestinian people and the Israeli people. There were mistakes. I am sure Mr. Peres made mistakes, I am sure we made mistakes, but on the whole, he has been our partner for peace so far.

[Rosen] Is the public running away from Labor?

[Beilin] I do not think so. As an academic, I must say that a poll in such a difficult week is a mood poll and not a poll of political positions. Had I been Netanyahu tonight and had I seen the poll, I would not have felt too good because following the expensive purchase of Tzomet and David Levi and two tough weeks which inevitably harmed the government in power, he is tied with Peres, which means that in the elections he is likely to lose.

[Sukenik] Dr. Sha'th, do you still see any possibility of some sort of dialogue with Hamas after the latest terrorist attacks?

[Sha'th] We have really lost faith and hope of making any dialogue with them succeed, particularly that we see that most of their instructions really now come from outside. The people here in Gaza are impotent. They are not the parties that make the decisions. And when you are talking to people who are not making decisions, you don't really have much faith that they could deliver, and I think that is the problem we are facing with Hamas now and that is why there is no dialogue now. [passage omitted]

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Algeria

Algeria: 10 Train Passengers Killed in Terrorist Attack

LD0903164896 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1600 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ten people were killed and 16 others wounded in an attack carried out against a passenger train by a band of criminals in the province of Tlemcen [some 540 km west of Algiers] yesterday. The attack took place at 1850 [1750 GMT] when the train was passing near the locality of Oued Chouly. According to a statement by the security services, the prompt intervention by the security forces, which gave chase to the criminals, prevented a much heavier toll.

Algeria: Security Forces Reportedly Seized Arms for GIA

BR0803160196 Brussels LE VIF-L'EXPRESS in French 8-14 Mar 96 p 20

[Unattributed article: "An Awkward Prisoner"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Although partially dismantled in France, Belgium, and the rest of Europe, the clandestine structure of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) nevertheless remains operational. Although the Islamic commandos are no longer placing bombs in Paris, they are increasing their supply lines to the Algerian rebels. On 19 February, the French security services arrested around 20 GIA sympathizers who they had been watching for a long time. [passage omitted].

Arms Traffic

But other channels are still active. [passage omitted] The arrest and conviction of Ahmed Zaoui, and the dismantling of his network, in March 1995, did not put an end to the GIA's activities in Belgium. GIA sympathizers have been identified in Brussels and Wallonia but others are also operating in Antwerp or on the Belgium-Netherlands border. Not much is known about these elements: In February 1993, the Algerian security forces seized a large store of arms (repeater rifles, handguns, machine guns, ammunition) in the hold of the "Djorf", a cargo vessel which had stopped at Antwerp. Then, in March 1995, the "Ouarsenis" was seized, also from Antwerp. On board, police officers found sophisticated communication equipment destined for the Algerian rebels. [passage omitted]

Egypt

Egypt: Official Announcement of Antiterrorism Conference 13 Mar

NC0803152096 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An official spokesman for the Presidency has announced the following: Since the evening of 7 March several heads of state and heads of government concerned with the Middle East peace process have been holding consultations. As a result they have agreed to hold a summit in Egypt on the morning of Wednesday 13 March 1996.

President Husni Mubarak and U.S. President Bill Clinton have issued invitations to the parties interested in establishing peace in the Middle East to attend the summit. Russian President Boris Yeltsin will attend the conference in his capacity as the president of one of the two countries sponsoring the peace operation that began in Madrid.

The discussions at the meeting will focus on ways to strengthen the peace process, promote regional security, and resist violence.

The city of Sharm al-Shaykh will be the likely venue of the conference on the morning of 13 March.

Egypt: MENA Confirms Summit To Be Held in Sharm al-Shaykh 13 Mar

NC0803154396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1525 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Mar (MENA)—It has been decided to hold a world summit meeting in the city of Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday [13 March] morning to examine ways to enhance Arab-Israeli peace, consolidate security, and fight violence.

This was stated today by the official presidential spokesman, who added that heads of states and governments concerned with peace in the Middle East have been holding consultations since last night. The consultations resulted in an agreement to hold the summit on Wednesday.

The spokesman said invitations were extended by President Husni Mubarak and U.S. President Bill Clinton to the parties concerned with establishing peace in the Middle East.

The spokesman added that Russian President Boris Yeltsin will participate in the conference as the head of a state that sponsored the peace process launched in Madrid. He pointed out that discussions will focus

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on ways to enhance Arab-Israeli peace, consolidate security, and fight violence.

Egypt: Mubarak Remarks on Antiterrorism Summit

NC0903101296 Cairo ESC Television in Arabic 0830 GMT 9 Mar 96

[News conference by Egyptian President Husni Mubarak with unidentified correspondents in Nasr City—live; italicized passages in English]

[FBIS Translated Text] [monitored in progress] [Correspondent] *...of this summit, the antiterrorism summit. And what is Egypt going to recommend in this summit? What are the measures, after Egypt's experiences in fighting terrorism? What are the measures that...?*

[Mubarak] *What are the...?*

[Correspondent] *Measures, measures that Egypt would recommend to the world leaders?*

[Mubarak] *I could tell you that the conference is going to convene on Wednesday [13 March] according to a proposal which I sent to President Clinton. The situation is the peace process is coming to meeting very difficult problems. We would like the wheel and the momentum of the peace to continue. That's why I asked for an international conference for that; and leaders of the world who participated in the Madrid [conference] should come and try to find out how we could push the peace process and remove all the obstacles and to condemn the terrorism which is hindering the progress of the peace process. So that is why I tell you that we are going to meet on the 13th of this month in Sharm al-Shaykh, hoping to reach a solution and to come out with a statement helping the peace process to continue. The measures, let us wait until all the heads of states and representatives come and meet and see what could be done. We are negotiating this now.*

['Izz-al-Din Khalil of AL-AHRAM WEEKLY] *You mentioned that there is going to be a statement at the end of the summit. Should we expect something more like a treaty or resolutions, binding resolutions, for the participants in the conference?*

[Mubarak] *Binding resolutions?*

[Khalil] *Yes. Or a treaty.*

[Mubarak] *I cannot foretell. But we are going to do our best with all the heads of states who are going to participate to find out what could be done so as to keep the momentum of the process continuing.*

[Correspondent] *Will the UN be asked to play a role as well, under the umbrella of the UN?*

[Mubarak] *Till now we did not invite the UN.*

[Correspondent] *President Mubarak. Would President Hafiz al-Asad attend this summit?*

[Mubarak] *I cannot tell you. I have contacted President al-Asad. He is thinking it over till now.*

[Correspondent] When in al-Sharqiyah Governorate you called for holding an international summit to combat terrorism. There was a quick and immediate response from the heads of state, who will participate in the summit, God willing. What issues are expected to be raised during the negotiations?

[Mubarak] The international conference or summit is different from what we are talking about. We are talking about an international conference to give momentum to the peace process because it has reached a dead end following the explosions and the acts of violence. For this reason we have to have a meeting or the peace process will collapse completely. There are differences between the two sides. The whole process has come to a halt. That is why we have called for this conference, and why the United States and other countries have responded—so we can discuss the measures or the actions with which the world could help the peace process.

[Correspondent] *Mr. President, do you think that accelerating the peace process in its final stages on all tracks — the Palestinian Authority and the Israelis, the Syrians and the Israelis, the Lebanese and the Israelis — would help curb violence in the area, reaching a final solution?*

[Mubarak] *Look, there are elements in the area here, not only in the area and other areas, who are not interested in the peace process to come to an end. We expect, and we have already expected, in the course of the procedure of the peace process we are going to meet problems and the terrorists so as to hinder the process from continuing forward. This is expected. So we have to work hard so as to continue the process; and this is the only solution to put an end to terrorism.*

[Correspondent] Will the conference discuss the issue of drying up the sources of financing for these terrorist groups so as to limit their activities?

[Mubarak] There is much talk about the sources of financing for terrorism. I believe that some countries have already started to do so, such as the United States and other countries. We heard in the past few days that a foreign newspaper has said that some financing is coming from the United Kingdom. I believe that the United Kingdom is eager for there to be no such funding. I believe that all the issues will be raised during the summit.

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[Correspondent] *You have been calling several times for holding a global conference to combat international terrorism. Do you think that had it not been for the wave of terrorist bombings that happened in Israel over the past two weeks the international community would not have moved to take tangible steps in holding the proposed conference next Wednesday in Egypt?*

[Mubarak] *Look, about terrorism: It is an international phenomenon now. Some countries are taking independent measures. But the last events, which is hindering the process to continue — and you know what is the tension now between the Israelis and the Palestinians and all over this part of the world — I think encouraged all parties to help in convening a meeting so as to find out a solution. Such a solution will tackle the problem of terrorism.*

[Correspondent] Your Excellency, will the Wednesday summit focus only on combating terrorism with a view to supporting the peace process, or will it deal with combating terrorism in general in order to support stability in the entire world?

[Mubarak] First, terrorism obstructs the peace process and shakes world stability. When we talk about peace and the need to advance it — because terrorism obstructs it — then I think we will be dealing with all aspects of world terrorism.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency, what is the role of the youths in the next stage, and will the programs of the new government give more chances to the young?

[Mubarak] Since I assumed power, we have been working for the youths, finding opportunities for them and giving them hope to support their families and lives. Otherwise, we would not have achieved what we have achieved. Of course, we have many problems, like the constant population growth. We are working hard to find jobs for these people and secure their means of livelihood. The government is working for the youths. Everything done by the ministers and the officials has this purpose.

[Correspondent] What is Your Excellency's evaluation of this [8th Youth] Exhibition?

[Mubarak] I will tell you after I see it, but I think there is good participation by the youth and new horizons for them; and I hope the prospects will constantly expand so that we can solve the problem of unemployment, like the rest of the world.

Egypt: Mubarak Exchanges Views on Conference With Moroccan King

NC0903215096 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak telephoned Moroccan King Hassan II this evening. They exchanged views on the international peacemaking conference which will meet in Sharm al-Shaykh next Wednesday [13 March] and whose objective is to boost the Middle East peace process.

Egypt: Mubarak Views Antiterror Conference, Peace, Press Law

NC1103080396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0607 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Mar (MENA)— President Husni Mubarak has stated that preparations are under way to hold the international peace conference in Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday [13 March]. He said U.S. President Bill Clinton, Russian President Yeltsin, French President Jacques Chirac, British Prime Minister John Major, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, South African President Nelson Mandela, and various leaders and representatives of European countries and those concerned with the peace cause in the region will attend the conference.

In a statement to MAYU Chief Editor Samir Rajab published in the 11 March edition President Mubarak expressed his optimism about the conference and its possible positive results with regard to putting the peace process back on the right track after recent problems caused by mutual acts of terrorism between the Palestinians and Israelis and the subsequent loss of lives, tension in the region, and the suspension of the peace process.

President Mubarak said: I hope the conference will advance the peace process on the Palestinian track, because the Palestinian issue is the basis, and on the Syrian track, so that a fair and comprehensive peace may prevail in the region. He noted that Egypt will chair the conference because it is the host country and the party that launched the initiative calling for it. He said the chairman's table will seat U.S. President Bill Clinton on the right of the chairman and Russian President Yeltsin on the chairman's left. He said President Yeltsin has been invited because his country is one of the two cosponsors of the peace process in the region.

Mubarak explained the details of contacts held between him and President Clinton before the announcement of the venue and date of the conference. He said: When I proposed the idea many leaders welcomed it and

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expressed enthusiasm. President Clinton contacted me immediately and said my view of things is always sound and that my position is clear to everyone.

Mubarak said the idea of a regional conference was ruled out, adding: We emphasized that it should be an international conference to give a strong boost to the peace process and so that the parties concerned might adhere to the agreements reached in front of the international community. He said world peace has become the main occupation of the international community. Regarding the venue, he said it was agreed on from the start that it would be Egypt. He said it was proposed to hold it in Madrid but U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was determined to convene it in Egypt because it was the party that called for it and holding it here would mean it being held in the heart of the region and regional events. He said that Taba, Luxor, al-Ghardaqah, and Sharm al-Shaykh were proposed and we chose Sharm al-Shaykh in view of its considerable resources and facilities to host the delegations. He noted that the conference needs extensive facilities and that Sharm al-Shaykh can handle this.

Mubarak said: I reassert that had it not been for Egypt and its efforts to launch, activate, and advance the peace process, the issue would not have moved, peace would have been endangered, and the call and response to hold this conference would not have been secured. He added that had it not been for Egypt, the closed doors of peace would not have opened from the beginning, adding: We always remember late President Anwar al-Sadat for launching the initiative; he was the hero of peace and war.

Discussing press freedom and the new draft press law being prepared, Mubarak emphasized his deep concern for press freedom. He said: I support the fullest possible press freedom but we must also protect the rights of individuals and society so that the issue does not become chaotic. He added: My concern for the freedom of the press and journalists is matched by my concern for protecting the rights of individuals and society. We must strike a balance between the two. He said: I have called for preparing a new law out of my faith in the freedom of the press and out of concern that journalists should write courageously, because the progress and development of any society depends upon many factors, primarily press freedom. He said: We always work and try to use every means for the progress and development of our country. This is our policy and ideology and we will not deviate from this path. I feel satisfied that the new draft law provides for abolishing the precautionary detention of journalists. I have never clung to the clause, as long as this is in the interest of journalists and does not contravene the Constitution.

Egypt: Musa—Peace Conference To 'Confront' Regional Violence

NC0903195496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1550 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said today that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit to be held on Wednesday [13 March] aims to boost the peace process, maintain security, and confront violence in the region. He said boosting the peace process is the main aim of the conference.

Asked whether the summit will issue a final document, Musa explained that there will be no final document but that a final communique might be issued.

On the benefit Egypt will gain from this summit, the Egyptian foreign minister said this summit aims to boost the process. Elaborating, he said the peace process means the Palestinian people's exercising their right to self-determination, Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab lands, and the start of relations of peace in the region. This is what Egypt wants.

Asked whether the participants in the conference will sign documents for maintaining the security of one state, namely Israel, Musa said this conference will be attended by some 30 countries, but not all countries. These states will discuss a specific issue, namely boosting the peace process. In other words, these states are interested in boosting the peace process in the Middle East.

Musa said we are all against violence, which causes the fall of innocent victims at a time when the rights of the Palestinian people are discussed and negotiations are underway on the Syrian and Palestinian tracks with a view to achieving peace, which means Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories. Obstructing this withdrawal through violence by both sides is unacceptable.

Asked if this conference will deal with the issue of the right of political asylum and extradition of terrorists, Musa said this is a political conference and it focuses on peacemaking. Asked whether the conference will discuss the problem of some terrorists seeking political asylum in some countries, Musa said we will discuss the peace process, the circumstances surrounding it, and the obstacles facing it within the context of strengthening the peace process.

Asked to comment on Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' remarks that this terrorism is nuclear and is more dangerous than the terrorism of the Nazis because Iran has nuclear weapons while the Nazis did not, Musa said any Israeli speculation on the nuclear aspect is unacceptable.

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Egypt: Musa Says Supporting Peace Basic Objective of Summit

NC0903110296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0845 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that the expanded meeting which President Husni Mubarak held at the Presidential Palace this morning—which was attended by the prime minister, the People's Assembly speaker, the Consultative Council speaker, and a number of ministers—discussed the international peacemakers conference that will be held in Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday [13 March] to review the peace process and the position on it.

In a statement after the meeting, Musa noted expanded world participation in the conference. He said 31 states were invited, and most of them had agreed to attend, responding positively and quickly that they will participate.

The basic reason for the conference, he said, is to bolster and promote the Middle East peace process.

He stressed that worldwide confrontation and resistance to terrorism is one of the topics that the world leaders will discuss. They will also discuss the necessary support and backing for the parties to the Middle East peace process so that peace and stability in the region will be achieved, he said.

On the ideas and papers proposed for discussion at the conference, Musa said contacts with the participating countries are now under way in this respect.

Egypt: Musa Says Intense Preparations Under Way for Summit

NC1003113696 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1000 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has said that intense preparations are being made for the international peacemakers conference in Sharm al-Shaykh through highest-level contacts and consultations between the Egyptian political leadership and world leaders and through those countries' foreign ministries.

He added that the Egyptian Foreign Ministry is in constant contact with these ministries.

In statements to journalists after President Mubarak's meetings today, Musa said world leaders taking part in the peacemakers summit will begin to arrive on Tuesday [12 March] evening and all will have arrived by Wednesday morning before the conference begins.

Egypt: Musa Comments Further on Antiterrorism Summit

NC1003162796 Cairo MENA in English 1500 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 10 (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa underlined that arrangements for the peace makers summit slated for Wednesday [13 March] in Sharm al-Shaykh are intensively being made through contacts and consultations held at highest levels between the Egyptian political leadership and leaders of world states and through the foreign ministers of those countries.

In statements to media men following President Husni Mubarak's meetings earlier today, Musa said that heads of state and delegations taking part in Sharm al-Shaykh summit will start arriving as of Tuesday evening.

UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali will arrive on Tuesday evening and U.S. President Bill Clinton will arrive at Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday morning, he said.

The response of world leaders to President Husni Mubarak's proposal and U.S. President Bill Clinton's invitation to hold the peace makers conference in Egypt and with such emergency represents an international outcry to maintain, promote and further peace, Musa said. It also portrays Egypt's weight and capabilities, he added.

There is constant coordination between Egypt and the various parties, especially with the Palestinians, Arabs and Israelis and this type of contact is also present with the Americans, he said.

All preparations for the conference are being arranged by the various protocol departments in Egypt, he added.

The conference will be open to all views that aim at guaranteeing, strengthening and promoting peace he added. Thirty one countries have been invited to attend and 20 leaders have confirmed their attendance, he said.

Musa said most world leaders will arrive directly in Sharm al-Shaykh for the conference, while UN Secretary General Butrus-Ghali will arrive in Cairo first. Ministers will arrive Tuesday night in Cairo as well as accompanying delegations and will later leave to Sharm al-Shaykh.

The main goal of the peace makers conference is, as stated in the Egyptian-American communique, is to promote peace, guarantee security and fight terrorism in the Middle East, Musa said.

The peace makers will meet in Egypt to realize these goals following the recent developments that have faced

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the peace process that threaten to undermine it, he added.

Egypt's call for the summation of an international conference on fighting terrorism is still standing but the Sharm al-Shaykh conference will center on promoting and maintaining peace and fighting terrorism that threatens peace in the region, he said.

The latest bombings that happened in Israel lately are not isolated from other incidents that took place in the region, Musa said. Acts of violence on both ends hinder the peace process, he said. The conference will not examine a specific incident but will dwell on developments and incidents that have affected and continue to affect the peace process in the region, he said. Asked about Syria's and Lebanon's position from the conference, Musa said that no specific response on their participation has been received yet.

Commenting on the repeated calls for the summation of the Madrid peace conference, Musa said Russia had previously made such a call. But he said he believed that the reconvening of such a conference would require two major prerequisites, namely the acceptance of this idea and the actual need for it, he said. This issue has not been examined or considered at this stage, he added.

Regarding the participation of all countries which had previously taken part in Madrid peace conference, including the co-sponsors of the peace march, the UN, Europe, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Israel and Arab States, except Syria and Lebanon, Musa said that the countries which will in fact take part in Sharm al-Shaykh conference are the same which had participated before in Madrid peace conference. This means that the summit of the peacemakers will not dissent from the context of the Madrid peace conference but will be a continuation of it, Musa added, noting that if Syria and Lebanon attend Sharm al-Shaykh conference, all parties will be represented.

The attendance of all parties is considered a crucial issue as the summit could give these parties a chance to expound their views in accordance with their interest, he added.

The absence of any party will affect the contribution of concerned parties as the conference aims at maintaining and saving peace, he said.

Egypt sees that the conference should aim at maintaining, strengthening and protecting peace, Musa further said.

Regarding the Egyptian-Palestinian coordination, Musa said that Egypt has constant contacts with Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat and other Arab parties.

Musa denied that the peace process reached a deadlock, saying that this is not true. The peace march in fact made some progress since the Madrid peace conference, Musa added. The peace march, however, is currently facing some obstacles which called for holding the summit of peacemakers to eliminate them and push the peace process forward, he said.

The summit of peacemakers follows the same course of the Madrid peace conference, namely giving peace a momentum and pushing it forward, Musa said.

It is not possible that the peace process can be promoted without the support of world leaders who are keen on maintaining it, the foreign minister added.

Egypt clearly asked all parties concerned with the peace march to respect all signed accords and abide by the set timetables, Musa said.

The siege imposed by Israel on the West Bank and Gaza Strip contradicts with what it had committed to, he added.

The Palestinians are currently facing severe difficulties due to the sealing off imposed by Israel, he said,noting that it is unreasonable to ask 'Arafat to take several measures, some of which are not of his competences. There are limits to the authority of the Palestinian leader and he has commitments as well as the Israeli side, Musa added.

Egypt: Interior Minister Discusses Security Plans for Summit

NC1003130596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1152 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 10 Mar (MENA)—Minister of Interior Hasan al-Alfi has held an expanded meeting with commanders and chiefs of various security sectors to devise security plans for the protection of heads of state and delegations taking part in the international peacemakers conference, due to be held in Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday [13 March].

The meeting was attended by the minister's top assistants and assistants for security, exit and entry points, state security, Tourism Police, ports security, passports, traffic, and private guards.

At the meeting the interior minister noted the world's confidence in Egypt's role in advancing the peace process through President Husni Mubarak's efforts.

He also noted the security authorities' role in providing security for all international conferences held in Egypt in the past. He said the entire world has praised Egyptian security personnel and their expertise and high performance in providing security for conferences.

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He asked all agencies to draw up urgent security plans and be completely cautious and serious in their work in light of the importance of the conference, which will enhance the world's confidence in Egypt's security apparatus.

Egypt: Cabinet Lauds 'Worldwide Response' to Antiterrorism Summit

NC1003114696 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Council of Ministers held a meeting under the chairmanship of [Prime Minister] Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri today. It announced that the international conference of peacemakers, due to be held in Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday [13 March], primarily aims to save and enhance the peace process in the Middle East and deal with the impact of recent violence on the peace process.

Stating this, Minister of Information Safwat al-Sharif added that the Council praised President Mubarak's work and initiatives to achieve stability and security for the region's nations. Particularly praised, he went on, were his efforts for a solution to the Palestinian issue, which is regarded as the core of conflict in the Middle East.

The Council of Ministers also lauded the broad worldwide response to calls by presidents Mubarak and Clinton for this important international conference. The Council emphasized that the conference is evidence of Egypt's pivotal role and international influence.

Egypt: Mubarak, Aides Discuss Arrangements for Conference

NC0903192196 Cairo MENA in English 1548 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Cairo, 9 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak affirmed today that saving peace and its consequences will be the core and main topic of the peace makers conference scheduled for Wednesday [13 March] at Sharm al-Shaykh, Sinai.

During his meeting today with his political aides to discuss arrangements for the World Conference of Peace Makers, President Mubarak underlined Egypt's pivotal role in maintaining the momentum of the peace march in the region, Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif told reporters today. [passage omitted]

Egypt: U.S. Team Arrives To Prepare for Clinton's Visit

NC0903201196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1920 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Mar (MENA)—A U.S. delegation arrived in Cairo this evening to prepare for President Clinton's visit to Egypt, during which he will attend the international peacemakers' conference, due to be held in Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday [13 March]. The delegation comprises 60 White House staffers, of whom 28 stayed in Cairo while the rest left for Sharm al-Shaykh to prepare for President Clinton's arrival.

Egypt: Al-Alfi, Pakistan's Babar Hold News Conference on Terror

NC0803170996 Cairo MENA in English 1650 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 8 Mar (MENA)—Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi has accentuated the exigency of serious and prompt global confrontation of terrorism through an international conference on fighting terrorism as an organized crime.

Al-Alfi pointed out, at the press conference his Pakistani counterpart Nasirullah Babar called following his arrival here today, that the conference, to be held in Egypt on Wednesday [13 March], comes in response to President Husni Mubarak's initiative in this regard during his recent meeting with university students.

President Mubarak has repeatedly warned world countries of the perils involved in continuing the financing and sheltering of some terrorism leaderships abroad, al-Alfi said.

Terrorism has become an international crime with many countries suffering from its scourge, al-Alfi said and stressed the necessity of cooperation between all Arab and foreign security agencies through the exchange of information, denying shelter to terrorist masterminds and striking them off payrolls.

On Babar's five-day visit to Egypt, al-Alfi said he will have talks with the Pakistani interior minister and his accompanying delegation on issues related to combating terrorism and others of concern to security in the two countries.

On the security agreement to be signed tomorrow between Egypt and Pakistan, al-Alfi said it will cover a wide spectrum of security cooperation, including information exchange, training and using modern weaponry in confronting terrorist crimes.

On coordination among Arab security agencies, al-Alfi cited continued contacts before and after the recent Arab

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interior ministers conference in Tunis in this regard and said there are contacts between all member states to implement the Egyptian- sponsored code of ethics on that score.

The Pakistani interior minister, responding to a query about the outcome of investigations into the Egyptian embassy blast in Pakistan, said the two persons involved in the attack, the driver of the booby-trapped car and the one who bought it, died during the operation.

The Pakistani authorities have asked Egypt for the outcome of investigations with some suspects handed over to Egypt, Babar said, adding that investigations are continuing to know whether the suspects were being financed by some non-governmental organizations.

On terrorism in Pakistan, Babar said Pakistani authorities have not received any reports on any terrorist attacks for about a week and that terrorist crimes rates in his country have slowed over the past six months and completely disappeared during the past three months.

On measures the Pakistani authorities have taken to confront Islamic groups inside the Islamic University in Islamabad, Babar revealed that some members of the teaching staff were found to have connections with the Muslim Brotherhood group.

On the role of religious parties in Pakistan in supporting terrorism, Babar said those groups are in effect offshoots of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

Members of the Brotherhood who come to Pakistan do so to train local groups or to deliver financial support offered by affluent countries running private universities in Pakistan, Babar explained.

On the ability of Pakistani security forces to control the border area, the Pakistani interior minister said the problem is that terrorist elements coming from neighbouring states put on the same kind of garb worn by the locals and carry several passports. Three weeks ago, three students were arrested coming from the Afghan borders, he said adding that upon questioning they produced Philippines passports but investigations proved them to be Malaysians.

Egypt: AL-AHRAM, AL-JUMHURIYAH View Antiterrorism Summit

NC0903155796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0625 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 9 Mar (MENA)—Cairo newspapers today praise the swift response to President Husni Mubarak's initiative of holding an international summit to save the Middle East peace process and fight international terrorism, which has grown so grave that it is now threatening all nations and the peace efforts in the region.

In banner headlines and front-page stories, the newspapers highlight Egypt's success in calling for this summit in Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday [13 March] and the announcement by many world leaders that they will attend. [passage omitted]

Commenting on the summit, AL-AHRAM says in an editorial entitled "Toward an International Confrontation of Terrorism" that the world wasted a long time before it woke up to the danger of terrorism. It points out that big and small countries alike have been hit by terrorism.

AL-AHRAM adds: Some big countries imagined that they were safe from terrorism, saying their political and economic circumstances protect them from this danger, or that terrorism is confined to specific world regions and environments. But they soon suffered from terrorism, no less intensely than the other countries.

It is a cause for of hope that President Husni Mubarak's call has echoed in the world, the paper says, adding: When this call is put into practice, the danger of terrorism will certainly subside locally and internationally.

Samir Rajab, chairman of the board of AL-JUMHURIYAH, writes in his daily column: Perhaps everybody knows that 'Arafat and Peres are now going through a hard time. It is not logical that a dialogue over peace should be held while gunfire is killing the hope in the souls of innocent people, for whose sake this peace is supposedly being made.

He adds: It is a must that the two leaders receive general and comprehensive support to help them continue along the path. Otherwise, we will return to point zero, where guns become the only language of understanding, and that will be a disaster.

Rajab goes on: The summit that will be held in Egypt will, God willing, produce positive results, not only for the issue of peace in the Middle East, but also for the issue of terrorism in general. President Husni Mubarak had warned that terrorism will affect the whole world without exception, and that those who plan or call for dirty terrorist operations will pay a large price. This was proved by the developments of the past few days and months.

Rajab concludes: Welcome to the leaders of the world. Egypt is pleased to host them on a dear spot of its land, giving vivid example on the growing importance of peace.

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Egypt: Cairo Press Comments on Sharm al-Shaykh Summit

NC1003092896 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0625 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 10 Mar (MENA)—The peacemakers summit called for by President Husni Mubarak was reported in banner headlines in today's Cairo papers. The newspapers give prominence to the summit.

The newspapers' editorials center on this summit and its importance to the peace process. Several writers devote their comments to the summit's convening in Egypt and stress the need to salvage a just and comprehensive peace for the sake of all the region's nations, not for Israel alone.

In a commentary entitled "The Peacemakers of Sharm al-Shaykh," AL-AHRAM says that this summit marks a new turning point for the peacemakers in the region now that the peace settlement has entered a critical stage as a result of the practices of the forces of intransigence and arrogance on both sides.

The newspaper notes that this summit is bound to salvage and bolster the peace process and rectify its various tracks, because all the various peace efforts are an integral whole. AL-AHRAM asserts that this summit is a blow to the policies of international terrorism followed by some countries and extremist groups. The paper says that all signs are that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit will mark a new starting point for a lasting and just peace process in the region. It adds that the statement expected to be issued at the end of the summit will be another document binding on all peacemakers.

Under the headline "The Sharm al-Shaykh Summit and Israel's Expected Foolish Acts," AL-AKHBAR welcomes the extensive and swift response by world leaders, led by U.S. President Clinton, to the convening of an international summit to salvage the peace, as called for by President Husni Mubarak. The summit is slated for Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday, 13 March, the paper adds.

AL-AKHBAR notes that this international summit, which will be attended by more than 30 heads of state, will focus on finding an effective means to salvage peace and confront terrorism through joint international efforts following the vile crimes committed as part of this phenomenon.

The paper sternly criticizes the Israeli Government's foolish acts in some Palestinian areas, such as the attack on Hebron University and the burning of its laboratories and books. AL-AKHBAR maintains that these Israeli practices are unprecedented for a rational government. These practices represent a violation of the sovereignty of the recognized Palestinian self-rule authority.

For its part, AL-JUMHURIYAH states that the swift response to President Mubarak's call for a peace summit reaffirms Egypt's leading role in salvaging peace from the suspicious scheme concocted by aggressive forces and implemented by extremists who have sold themselves to Satan. The summit demonstrates Egypt's civilized role, the paper adds.

In conclusion, AL-JUMHURIYAH notes under its headline "Egypt and the Peacemakers Summit" that no solution can be reached by halting the peace efforts. Instead we must immediately adopt the necessary measures to confront terrorism.

The opposition newspaper AL-WAFD supports the holding of the peacemakers summit called for by President Husni Mubarak to confront terrorism, which has become a threat to the region and the desired peace process.

Under the headline "We Reject Violence and the Attempts To Exclude Israel," the paper criticizes Israel's acts of aggression against the Palestinian people, particularly the policy of blockade, starvation, and threats. AL-WAFD warns against making the summit a tool to entitle Israel to use its long arm to discipline whomever it likes. The paper calls on the summit to impose binding constraints on everyone without exception, especially Israel.

Jalal Duwaydar, editor in chief of AL-AKHBAR welcomes the peacemakers summit in Sharm al-Shaykh. He says: even if the summit's theme is to salvage the peace process in the Middle East, we should not forget the fact that the world is currently afflicted by terrorism, which imperils peace, security, and stability.

In his editorial entitled "The Sharm al-Shaykh Summit Will Only Be Held Because of Egypt's Warnings," the writer says that the only solution to this problem lies in frankness and in in-depth discussions of the stands of certain countries that support terrorism. He notes that giving refuge and money to the terrorist groups represents actual participation in all acts of terrorism. The writer says that such countries should be held responsible for their policies.

The writer concludes his editorial by urging the summit to adopt a unified stand against terrorism. He also urges the summit to call for a just and comprehensive peace, a peace for all the region's nations, not just peace for Israel alone.

AL-JUMHURIYAH Editor in Chief Mahfuz al-Ansari lauds President Mubarak's call for this summit and the

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quick agreement of many world leaders to attend the summit in Egypt. He says that Mubarak's Egypt is ready to present ideas and concepts and is also ready to host it and accord hospitality on its good land, which harbors no enmity nor hatred for anyone.

In his editorial "Mubarak's Salvation Summit, the Sharm al-Shaykh Meeting Is the Beginning," al-Ansari affirms that Egypt's state and authority, armed with broad awareness of the situation in the region, is the only one capable of hosting such a summit. The writer maintains that Egypt was the first to advance the idea of peace, the process of which has started to involve all fronts. Egypt is the resort for all parties in the event of confrontation, crisis, or deadlock.

The writer says that the peacemakers summit, which will be cochaired by Presidents Mubarak and Clinton, aims to salvage peace in the region. The summit is not just to save Israel, as some people imagine. The summit will not only condemn certain countries and regional and local forces, it will also deal with issues that are much greater than the small and isolated terrorist operations. Al-Ansari voices the conviction that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit's pressing task is to open the road for a true peace.

Egypt: Pakistani Interior Minister Arrives in Cairo

NC0803143996 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1228 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Mar (MENA) — Pakistani Interior Minister Nasirullah Babar arrived in Cairo today with a large security delegation for an official five-day visit to Egypt. He will meet with President Husni Mubarak and hold talks with Egyptian Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi on security cooperation between Egypt and Pakistan.

Egypt: Mubarak Receives Pakistani Interior Minister

NC0903130896 Cairo MENA in English
1056 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 9 Mar (MENA) President Husni Mubarak today received Pakistani Interior Minister Nasirullah Khan Babar at the Presidency headquarters. The meeting was attended by Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi, Director of the Pakistani Federal Investigations Major General Abdel Rahman Malik and the Pakistani ambassador to Egypt.

Egypt: Pakistan's Babar Comments After Meeting Mubarak

NC0903142896 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1400 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Mar (MENA)—Pakistani Interior Minister Lieutenant General Nasirullah Babar was received by President Husni Mubarak today. Following the meeting, the Pakistani minister said that the Egyptian and Pakistani governments have reiterated their determination to keep up their fight against terrorism, pointing out that the two countries share the same views on the issue.

The Pakistani minister added that he had conveyed a message to President Mubarak from Pakistani President Farooq Leghari and another from Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto concerning bilateral relations and cooperation.

Babar added that he had presented Mubarak with an invitation from the Pakistani president to visit Pakistan and that the president promised to respond as soon as possible.

He pointed out that the meeting reviewed issues pertaining to terrorism and ways to fight it, in addition to other issues of mutual interest.

The Pakistani minister described his meeting with the president as good and productive, thanking President Mubarak for granting him this opportunity.

Asked whether he had submitted a report to President Mubarak on the findings of investigations into the Islamabad Embassy blast, he replied: Investigations have been concluded in Pakistan. The two perpetrators were identified. One was killed in the blown up car, while the other was killed after the explosion and his body was found under the rubble. They were both identified as Egyptians.

He added: Egypt and Pakistan are coordinating their work. The Egyptian authorities are providing us with information on those two persons and their links with other groups so that all the links can be traced.

For his part, Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi said that Egypt and Pakistan will sign a security agreement during the Pakistani minister's visit. The agreement will cover all security angles in the context of fighting terrorism, organized crime, narcotics, and forgery.

Egypt: Security Agreement Signed With Pakistan

NC0903164696 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1410 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Mar (MENA)—Egypt and Pakistan signed a security agreement today on

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fighting terrorism, narcotics, extortion, counterfeiting, and forgery.

Signed by Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi and his Pakistani counterpart Nasirullah Babar, the agreement provides for fighting terrorism, exchanging information on various security cases, and combating drug smuggling.

The agreement also provides for pursuing terrorists and curbing terrorism in both countries.

The Pakistani minister arrived in Cairo yesterday leading a security delegation on a visit that will last several days. While in Cairo, he will meet with senior officials to discuss ways to bolster security cooperation and bilateral ties.

Egypt: Al-Alfi, Pakistan's Babar Hold Joint News Conference

NC0903191996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1542 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Mar (MENA)—Pakistani Interior Minister Nasirullah Babar described the international peacemakers conference which will be held in Sharm al-Shaykh on 13 March as a great initiative to deter and eradicate terrorism from the world. He affirmed that President Husni Mubarak is the author of great initiatives which come at the appropriate time to promote the peace process in the region.

At a joint news conference with Egyptian Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi today, Babar said the security agreement signed between the two countries today culminates the relations between the two countries and is designed to contain and eradicate the phenomenon of terrorism. He explained that more important than the security agreement is the determination of the two countries to contain and eradicate terrorism wherever it may be. He noted that the agreement covered all security aspects, including terrorism, drug trafficking, and counterfeiting.

Asked whether Pakistan will participate in the upcoming conference in Sharm al-Shaykh, Babar said he will know in the next few hours who will represent Pakistan at the conference. He indicated that it is expected that Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who is currently visiting Indonesia, will attend the conference.

Babar explained that Pakistan has made efforts to confront terrorism. He noted that the Pakistani authorities arrest any terrorists from Afghanistan trying to infiltrate into Pakistan. A number of these terrorists have been arrested while others have fled back to Afghanistan because they know they have no place in Pakistan. He noted that there are Islamic groups in Pakistan but these have not been involved in any terrorist operations. However, there are organizations which receive funding and support from Afghan groups. The Pakistani security authorities have put these organizations under surveillance.

The Pakistani Interior Minister noted that the Pakistani authorities have recently extradited a number of terrorists to Egypt and Saudi Arabia. He asserted that Pakistan is confronting terrorism within a framework of a collective confrontation by the Islamic and Arab states. He said that Pakistan will spare no effort to cooperate with the fraternal countries. He added that after the bombing of the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan asked Egypt to send a high-level delegation to investigate the incident. He noted that Egypt and Pakistan have agreed to boost security cooperation between them in all domains.

Egyptian Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi stressed the need for all states to cooperate and hunt down terrorist leaders abroad. He indicated that these terrorist leaders are active abroad, hold constant meetings, and receive funds from some quarters.

Asked about Arab cooperation in this domain, al-Alfi noted that the Arab Interior Ministers Conference held recently in Tunis discussed the Egyptian antiterror working paper. He asserted that there are constant contacts between Egypt and the Islamic states, above all Pakistan, on boosting security cooperation and combating terrorism.

Commenting on the signing of the security agreement between the two countries, al-Alfi affirmed that its results will be fruitful not only in fighting terrorism but also in fighting organized crime, drugs, and counterfeiting.

Egypt: Judicial Cooperation Agreement Signed With Pakistan

NC0903201796 Cairo MENA in English 1856 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 9 Mar (MENA)—Egypt and Pakistan today signed an agreement on judicial cooperation.

Minister of Justice Faruq Sayf-al-Nasr and Pakistani Minister of Interior Nasirullah Babar, who is now visiting here, concluded the treaty. The treaty is a supplement of the extradition treaty signed between both countries in July 1994, said Sayf-al-Nasr after signing the agreement.

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Egypt: Lawyer Files 'Hisbah' Case Against Saddam Husayn

NC0903201596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1940 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Mar (MENA)—An Egyptian lawyer has lodged with the Egyptian public prosecutor an Islamic Hisbah case against Saddam Husayn demanding that he be divorced from his wife and be put on trial for his crimes against Iraqi children and women and his execution of army commanders.

In its 10 March issue, the newspaper AL-SIYASI AL-MISRI says lawyer Sami Raslan filed his case on the basis of a clause in the Egyptian and Iraqi constitutions stipulating that the Islamic shari'ah is the source of legislation.

The newspaper quotes Raslan as saying that he is using his right in accordance with the new Egyptian law regulating the Hisbah cases. The lawyer has asked the public prosecutor to file a criminal case against Saddam Husayn who is not a trustworthy husband anymore and could kill his wife at any time.

[In Islamic jurisprudence, Hisbah is the right of every Muslim to take legal action against another Muslim or group of Muslims whom he believes have inflicted harm on Islam or violated Islamic teachings]

Egypt: Mubarak, Cuban Official Discuss Bilateral Ties

NC0903143396 Cairo MENA in English 1359 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 9 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa today received the head of the international relations committee of the Cuban National Assembly, currently visiting here.

The Cuban official, who is also member of the Politbureau of the Cuban Communist Party, described his talks with Musa as "excellent." The meeting dealt with bilateral relations, he said, adding that the two sides expressed willingness to promote them.

Morocco

Morocco: King Hassan To Attend Cairo Antiterrorism Summit

NC1003083896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0715 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Rabat, 10 Mar (MENA)—Moroccan King Hassan II will take part in the peacemakers summit to be held in Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday [13 March]. A Moroccan team is expected to arrive in Cairo later today to prepare for King Hassan's visit. The king of Morocco received an invitation from President Mubarak yesterday to attend the summit.

Morocco: Iraq's Ramadan Meets With King Hassan

JN0903182296 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in English 1700 GMT 9 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The personal envoy of his excellency the president, Mr. Taha Yasin Ramadan, the vice president, was received in Morocco by King Hassan II. Speaking to the IRAQ NEWS AGENCY correspondent following the meeting, Mr. Ramadan said that he conveyed the president's greetings to his majesty as well as a verbal message dealing with the latest developments between Iraq and the United Nations Special Committee on the implementation of Resolution 687 and the need for the Security Council to respect its commitments towards Iraq in implementation of Article 22 of the resolution.

The vice president said that he briefed the Moroccan monarch on Iraq's full cooperation with the United Nations' delegation to the dialogue on oil in return for food, medicine, and basic human needs of the Iraqi people, and Iraq's concern to make a success of the dialogue.

The vice president said that His Majesty King Hassan II showed full understanding of Iraq's suffering resulting from the sanctions, affirming Morocco's stands calling for a total lifting of the sanctions and its concern to exert all efforts towards achieving this goal and to help ease the suffering of the Iraqi people.

The president's envoy left Morocco last night, concluding a tour of the Arab Maghreb states.

Morocco: Iraq's Ramadan Praises 'Positive Spirit' of Rabat Talks

LD0903140996 Rabat MAP in English 1323 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Mar. 9 (MAP) — Taha Yasin Ramadan, Iraqi vice-president and envoy of President Saddam Husayn, expressed satisfaction at the outcome of his visit to Morocco and the "positive spirit" that marked his talks with Moroccan officials.

He told reporters before leaving Morocco that these talks dealt with Moroccan-Iraqi cooperation and the Iraqi-U.N. negotiations on the embargo imposed on Baghdad since the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Taha Yasin Ramadan had earlier been received by King Hassan II to whom he handed a message from President Saddam Husayn of Iraq.

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The Iraqi envoy had also informed Moroccan premier and foreign affairs and cooperation minister, Abdellatif Filali, on the evolution of relations between Iraq and the UN Security Council.

He reportedly met on Thursday [7 March] in Rabat with leaders of Moroccan opposition parties.

Taha Yasin Ramadan had previously visited Algeria, Tunisia and Libya and handed to these countries' heads of state messages from President Saddam Husayn.

Sudan

Sudan: Minister Confirms Foiled 'Mini-Coup' Attempt

AB1103104596 London BBC World Service in English 0600 GMT 11 Mar 96

[From the "Network Africa" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A senior Sudanese official has confirmed reports that the security forces foiled what he described as a mini-coup attempt by Army officers last week. The minister of state for foreign affairs Ghazi Salah al-Din Atabani said that a small number of officers had planned to overthrow the government during the general elections last week. He said the officers had been arrested and that they had never posed a serious threat. The London-based Arabic newspaper (AL-HAYAT) reported that about 20 officers were arrested.

Sudan: Hasan al-Turabi Comments on Boycott of Elections

LD0903201896 Paris Radio France International in French 1830 GMT 9 Mar 96

[Report on interview with Hasan al-Turabi by RFI correspondent Jean Helene in Khartoum; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Sudanese general election started on 6 March and should continue for eight more days. Hasan al-Turabi, the ideologue of the Sudanese Islamic regime, said that the boycott of the campaign by the Sudanese opposition parties was only a formal protest and that approval for the regime was deep-rooted among politicians. Al-Turabi was interviewed by our special correspondent in Khartoum, Jean Helene:

[Al-Turabi] They will all wait until almost the end before casting their votes. I think there will be a high turnout.

[Helene] The opposition is boycotting these elections. They say there is not a favorable and democratic climate for an election.

[Al-Turabi] I believe this is only a formal boycott and that people are loyal to the leaders and that they will take part in the elections, both as voters and as candidates. It is always [words indistinct] like this in Sudan, I believe. Now people are free to run in the elections and to express themselves on television, on the radio, in the papers, at rallies, at [word indistinct] and say what they want, I believe. We are absolutely free now.

Sudan: Al-Turabi's Election Opponent Protests Police Harassment

AB0803142896 Paris AFP in English 1352 GMT 08 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, March 8 (AFP) — The opponent of Sudan's spiritual leader Hassan al-Turabi in lesiglative elections accused police and election officials on Friday of threatening his supporters and violating voting rules.

"Police and civilians have come to the homes of my supporters in the middle of the night to frighten them into voting against me," Abdel Rahman al-Sallawi told AFP.

"We have filed a suit at the constitutional court but it was refused. We will try again and I have suspended my candidacy until the court rules on my complaints," said the businessman.

Sallawi already announced his withdrawal from the race on Thursday, complaining his representatives had been barred from "placing their seals on ballot boxes before they were taken away" and from accompanying the boxes to storage places.

Polls opened Wednesday throughout Sudan in elections for a president and 275 members of a 400-seat parliament, with the press reporting a "weak turnout" at the start of 11 days of voting.

Sallawi said election officials had "tried to bribe all my representatives," adding that "some of them accepted."

"They have also removed the names of my supporters from voting lists," the candidate said, charging that the police and election officials were "not neutral in this race."

Babiker Abdel Sayed, the election president in the district, denied Sallawi had put forward any complaints or that his representatives had been barred from sealing boxes.

Turabi, thought by many to be the real power behind Sudan's Islamic government led by President Omar al-Beshir, is running for his first official position.

Meanwhile, officials reported that participation was rising in the vote, with more women turning out than men.

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In Turabi and Sallawi's district of Khartoum, the number of voters went up from 2,537 the first day to 3,213 the second day, Abdel Sayed said.

"At least 60 percent of the voters were women," he said. Around 32,000 of the area's 90,000 resident are entitled to go to the polls.

"Men have to work during the day and so far it's women who have had the time," he said. "More men should turn out Friday because it's a day off. Also the close of polling has been extended from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m."

Two women, Aliwiya Ali Mussa and Salwa Fathi, are running for a seat in another Khartoum district, the daily Sudan al-Hadith reported.

A total 50,000 people have voted so far in Khartoum state, where participation is expected to reach 97 percent, the state's general secretary Bishri Ahmad al-Sheikh told Sudan al-Hadith.

The vote is the first since Beshir came to power in a 1989 coup, and the general is expected to easily win against 40 opponents, most of them unknowns. Political parties, dissolved in 1989, are barred from the vote.

The polling, which is being boycotted by the opposition, is to run until March 17 to maximimize the chances of Sudan's far-flung population to vote, according to election officials.

But Ahmad Mahmud Hassan, a former justice minister in the Beshir government and now a campaign worker for Sallawi, said the long voting time would "cast serious doubts on the results."

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Iraq: Government Refuses To Allow UN Commission into Building

NC0903073596 Paris AFP in English 0447 GMT 9 Mar 96

[Report by Anne Penketh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] United Nations, March 8 (AFP) — Iraq triggered a crisis with the United Nations on Friday [8 March] by barring UN inspectors from entering a government building suspected of containing documents on its illegal weapons programme.

The UN Security Council responded by demanding that Iraq reverse its decision which it said was a clear violation of UN resolutions governing the sanctions in place against Iraq for more than five years.

UNSCOM deputy chief Charles Duelfer, contacted by telephone in Baghdad, told AFP that he would meet with Iraqi officials at the irrigation ministry building at 0430 GMT in a bid to resolve the problem.

But he expressed doubts about the "purity of the site" in terms of information, because of the hours that had expired since the Iraqis refused entry to the inspectors.

UNSCOM had previously searched the building in 1992, when it belonged to the main Baghdad weapons producer known as the Military Industrial Corporation, linked to the Defence Ministry.

Security Council members said Friday's incident was "very serious" as it violated UN stipulations that the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) arms inspectors must be able to carry out their work unimpeded.

The incident is the most serious of its kind since July 1992, when Baghdad prevented UN inspectors from entering its Agriculture Ministry for a three-week period.

After the UN team was denied access to the Iraqi irrigation ministry, UNSCOM chairman Rolf Ekeus ordered his team to surround the building and guard the entrances to prevent sensitive material being removed.

The inspectors believe the building holds documents which could contain information on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programme in the past.

Diplomats said that Iraqi government officials were also outside the building as the standoff continued hours later into the night. They added there were fears that sensitive documents might be destroyed inside.

Negotiations were underway late Friday between Ekeus and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz. According to Western diplomats, the discussions aimed to obtain entry to the building for a "large delegation," not necessarily all 43 members of the UN team.

Security Council president Legwaila Legwaila said that if a solution was not found overnight, the Council would meet again Saturday at 11:00 a.m. (1800 GMT) to discuss further options, which diplomats said were likely to result in adoption of a formal statement.

Ekeus earlier told the Council that the building now known as the Irrigation Ministry had changed hands several times. It had previously been part of the Defence Ministry, had then become a construction company and had recently become part of the Irrigation Ministry.

Iraq told Legwaila that ministries had a "special status" as they were sensitive and consequently had restricted access.

But the draft statement circulating late Friday among Security Council members points out that Iraq is obliged under UN resolutions to give free access to the weapons experts.

The draft, obtained by AFP, says that Iraq's denial of access to the UN team was "a material and unacceptable breach" by Baghdad of the main ceasefire Resolution 687 adopted after the Gulf War.

The text demands "immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access" to the premises concerned.

UNSCOM was formed after the Gulf War to ensure that Iraq had destroyed its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs, and that it no longer had missiles to carry them.

Under UN resolutions, Iraq must satisfy the arms inspectors that it has destroyed and given full information on its weapons of mass destruction to win an end to a five-and-a-half-year crippling oil and trade embargo imposed after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

On Thursday, Jordanian authorities accused Baghdad of violating UN resolutions by importing military spare parts under the guise of agricultural equipment. Baghdad has said that the parts were imported legally with UN consent.

The stand-off also comes only three days before an Iraqi delegation is due to resume talks with the United Nations on an oil-for-food deal that could lead to Iraq resuming limited oil exports for the first time since sanctions were imposed.

[Paris AFP in English at 0645 GMT on 9 March carries a United Nations datelined item that adds the following: "A tense standoff continued in Baghdad on Saturday outside an Iraqi government ministry where officials

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refused entry to UN arms inspectors in defiance of UN demands, a top UN disarmament expert said. Charles Duelfer, deputy head of the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) which monitors Iraqi compliance with UN arms sanctions stemming from the Gulf War, told AFP contacted by telephone in Baghdad that a meeting with Iraqi officials wound up inconclusively. Duelfer said he had passed on to Iraqi General 'Amir al-Sa' messages from UNSCOM chief Rolf Ekeus demanding that the UN team be allowed to enter the Iraqi Irrigation Ministry building, but that 'the situation now is that we do not have access.' He noted that with the Iraqis having denied access to the building for a total eleven-and-a-half hours, 'the site is becoming more and more compromised' as staff returned to work there on Saturday morning.

["Forty-three UN inspectors have been posted outside the Irrigation Ministry, guarding entrances, after Iraqi authorities refused to allow them into the building on Friday in defiance of UN resolutions which say the inspectors must carry out their work freely. The UN inspectors wanted to carry out a snap search as they suspected that the building might contain information on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programme in the past. They had previously visited the building, when it was linked to the defence ministry, in 1992. Duelfer said there was no set time for a further meeting with the Iraqis, and that he was waiting to be contacted again by the Baghdad government. 'We hoped that the relationship with the Iraqi government had improved. But we've got a problem,' he said."]

[In another United Nations datelined item carried at 0213 GMT on 9 March, Paris AFP in English adds the following: "The Iraqi ambassador to the United Nations on Friday said he hoped for a solution soon to a stand-off outside an Iraqi government ministry between UN arms inspectors and Iraqis. Ambassador Nizar Hamdun spoke to reporters after holding talks at the Security Council with the chairman of the UN Special Commission, Rolf Ekeus, on Iraq's decision to bar a team of UN inspectors from entering the Iraqi Irrigation Ministry. 'We hope that we will reach a solution to that problem as soon as possible,' he said. AFP continues: "Asked whether a solution would be reached soon, Hamdun added: 'I do hope so, soon.' He refused further comment."]

Iraq: Standoff With UNSCOM Members Continues Outside Building

NC0903123496 Paris AFP in English
1204 GMT 9 Mar 96

[Report by Farouk Choukri]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, March 9 (AFP) — Iraq and the United Nations were locked in a tense stand-off on Saturday [9 March] after officials barred UN weapons inspectors from entering a government building suspected of containing documents on banned weapons programmes.

More than 12 hours after they arrived at the Irrigation Ministry to make a surprise search, inspectors from the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) on disarming Iraq were still surrounding the 10-storey building on Saturday.

"We are prepared to stay there, waiting for the Iraqi response" to a demand from UNSCOM chief Rolf Ekeus that his experts be allowed to enter, a UN spokesman said.

"We went there on a no-notice inspection, expecting to gain access in a reasonably quick time. We have now been waiting for more than 12 hours."

The team of ballistic weapons experts, headed by Russian Nikita Smidovitch, wanted to make a snap search as they suspected the building might contain information on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programme.

The building was previously part of the Defence Ministry and been inspected by the UN in 1992. But on Friday the Iraqi authorities refused to let them in saying ministries had a "special status" and therefore restricted access.

Forty-three inspectors were posted outside the Irrigation Ministry throughout the night, guarding entrances to ensure that no documents were removed.

On Saturday, 25 inspectors in blue baseball caps remained parked round the building in white UNSCOM jeeps to monitor the comings and goings of government staff.

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But they were worried that documents may have been destroyed or removed from the building as they waited. UNSCOM deputy chief Charles Duelfer said: "The site is becoming more and more compromised."

"We can see people going in and out, we don't know if it's business as usual inside," he added.

Duelfer met with an aide to President Saddam Husayn, General 'Amir al-Sa'di, overnight to pass on a message from UNSCOM chief Rolf Ekeus demanding Iraq grant entry to his inspectors.

By midday Saturday there was no response and the UN Security Council was to meet later the same day in New York to discuss the options left open if no solution was found.

If Iraq refuses to budge, then "it will be up to the Security Council to decide on the future form of action," Duelfer said.

He said no deadline had been set for Iraq's compliance, and that the situation was calm around the building with no harassment of inspectors reported. [passage omitted]

Iraq: MENA Reports on Standoff Around Irrigation Building

NC0903125096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1135 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 9 Mar (MENA)— A source at the UN Special Commission, UNSCOM said in Baghdad this morning that the Commission's inspection team, now in Iraq, is still awaiting Iraqi government approval to inspect the Iraqi Irrigation Ministry's building, after the concern raised last night and this morning.

The source told a MENA correspondent in Baghdad that the 40-member team, headed by Russian expert Nikita Smidovitch headed to the building after its arrival in Baghdad yesterday and spent the night inside UN cars.

According to eyewitness accounts, the situation near the building was normal this morning, with normal traffic on the roads and normal guard by Iraqi policemen.

The source said Charles Duelfer, the vice chairman of the Special Commission, who is now in Baghdad, is closely following the situation.

The source said the situation was still the same at 1100 today, and that a number of experts returned to UNSCOM headquarters while others remained in their cars to watch the situation.

A crisis emerged between the Special Commission and the Iraqi side in July 1992 over the inspection of the Iraqi Agriculture Ministry building.

Iraq: Government Allows UN Inspectors To Search Ministry Building

NC0903132196 Paris AFP in English 1305 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, March 9 (AFP) — Iraq on Saturday [9 March] authorised UN weapons inspectors to search a government building here after a stand-off of more than 12 hours, a UN official said.

"Iraq has agreed this morning to inspect the building. They started at 14:30 p.m. (1800 GMT)," the official said, asking not to be named.

The Iraqi authorities on Friday refused entry to the Irrigation Ministry to a team of UN ballistic weapons experts who believed the building may contain documents on Baghdad's banned arms programmes.

The inspectors from the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) on disarming Iraq then surrounded the Ministry overnight, guarding entrances to ensure no documents were removed.

The UN Security Council was to hold a meeting in New York at 11:00 a.m. (1800 GMT) Saturday if Iraq had not agreed to the search.

Iraq: UNSCOM Team Completes Search of Ministry Building

NC1003112196 Paris AFP in English 1012 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, March 10 (AFP) — UN weapons inspectors have completed an eight-hour search of Iraq's Irrigation Ministry, which they were allowed to enter only after a tense 18- hour standoff with the authorities, a UN official said Sunday [10 March].

"We can't say anything at the moment" on what the ballistic weapons experts found in the building, which used to be part of Iraq's Defence Ministry, the official with the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) on disarming Iraq said.

The government barred the inspectors from entering the ministry when they turned up unannounced on Friday to make a snap search. The UN team said it suspected documents relating to Iraq's banned weapons programmes were inside the building.

The 43 inspectors then surrounded the 10-storey building overnight and into Saturday, guarding entrances in an attempt to ensure that no sensitive documents were smuggled out.

But UNSCOM officials voiced concern that material may have been destroyed inside the building. "The site

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is becoming more and more compromised," deputy chief Charles Duelfer said.

They were finally given authorisation to search the building on Saturday, just hours before the UN Security Council was to hold an emergency meeting in New York to discuss what action to take.

"The inspection of the building ended at around 10:00 p.m. (1900 GMT)" on Saturday, the UNSCOM official said.

The Security Council meeting was cancelled, a UN spokesman in New York said.

The UN inspection team headed by a Russian, Nikita Smidovich, is to stay in Iraq for a week.

Iraq has been under a UN oil and trade embargo since its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Under 1991 Gulf War ceasefire resolutions, it must satisfy UNSCOM it has destroyed its weapons of mass destruction and it must allow long-term monitoring of its arms programmes before the sanctions can be lifted.

Iraq must also provide free access to UNSCOM monitors.

Iraq: UNSCOM Team Finds Nothing in Search of Iraqi Ministry

NC1003125896 Paris AFP in English
1137 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Baghdad, March 10 (AFP) — A UN disarmament official said Sunday [10 March] his inspectors failed to find any documents relating to Iraq's banned weapons programmes during a search of the Irrigation Ministry here.

The Iraqi authorities had barred the inspection team from the ministry building for 18 hours before they allowed the search to go ahead.

"The inspection of the site is complete and at first sight we haven't found any documents which could help us," said Charles Duelfer, deputy head of the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) on disarming Iraq.

The team of ballistics experts turned up unannounced at the ministry on Friday to make a snap search, on the belief that it contained material on Iraq's past arms programmes. [passage omitted]

The search, when it finally went ahead Saturday, took around eight hours.

The UN inspection team headed by a Russian, Nikita Smidovich, is to stay in Iraq for a week. [passage omitted]

Iraq: INA Reports on Inspection of Irrigation Ministry Building

JN1103134496 Baghdad INA in English
1210 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, March 11, INA— Inspectors of the U.N. Special Commission who entered into the premises of the Iraqi Ministry of Irrigation have become aware of the authenticity and credibility of the Iraqi side. The inspectors have not found anything related to the work of UNSCOM inside the building. This furnishes evidence to the fact that the information received by the Special Commission about the building is totally baseless. The UNSCOM inspectors left the ministry premises without taking out anything.

The Iraqi side had allowed a limited number of inspection team 143 members into the Ministry of Irrigation. The team, made of 43 inspectors, demanded to inspect the ministry, alleging that it was a facility of the Military Industry Commission. The Iraqi authorities had confirmed that the building houses offices of the minister of irrigation and other departments of the ministry, but the inspection team insisted on going into the building.

Iraq: UN Disarmament Official Says Baghdad Committed to Cooperation

NC1103134896 Paris AFP in English
1056 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, March 11 (AFP)— Iraq has renewed its pledge to cooperate with UN arms inspectors after a standoff outside a ministry in Baghdad, a senior UN disarmament official said here Monday [11 March].

"We discussed the incident in great detail. The result is a commitment on the part of Iraq to continue cooperation with the Commission and the UN," said the deputy chief of the UN Special Commission on disarming Iraq (UNSCOM).

"They have provided the assurance that Iraq will continue its full cooperation with the Commission," said Charles Duelfer, at the end of a five-day visit.

He said the 18-hour standoff outside the irrigation ministry before arms inspectors were granted access on Saturday was "a very, very serious matter which I hope will not be repeated."

On Saturday, Duelfer said no arms documents were found at the ministry.

Since the incident, "the cooperation has been satisfactory, and I think that is a positive step," Duelfer said

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after a last meeting with Oil Minister 'Amir Muhammad Rashid before flying out of Baghdad.

He said Iraq had handed over final reports on its chemical, ballistic missiles, nuclear and biological weapons programmes.

"Since we have just received these new declarations, I expect our inspectors will be coming soon to discuss these declarations with the Iraqi government," said the American.

He said a 43-member team of ballistic missiles experts already in Baghdad would stay on. UN chemical arms experts, meanwhile, left Baghdad on Sunday with new documents after a 15-day mission.

Duelfer was in Baghdad notably to assess the monitoring system set up at Iraq's weapons facilities. UNSCOM chief Rolf Ekeus could return to Baghdad at the end of March, he said.

Later on Monday, Iraqi and UN negotiators in New York were to resume talks on an oil-for-food resolution which would allow Baghdad to export limited amounts of oil under strict supervision for the first time since 1990.

A strict UN trade embargo was imposed in August 1990 after Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait.

The sanctions are to stay in place until UNSCOM gives the all-clear that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and its capacity to produce such arms have been eliminated.

Iraq: Source Denies Deal With Company To Supply Helicopter Parts

JN0803191296 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1805 GMT 8 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraq has expressed its astonishment over a news report circulated by world news agencies concerning the importation of spare parts for MI-2 agricultural helicopters which are used to fight pests in the country through the al-Iman Company for Commercial Investments.

A responsible source at the Agriculture Ministry told INA that neither the ministry, nor the State Commission for the Protection of Crops, the agency that owns the planes in the country, have any contract with the said company to supply spare parts for agricultural helicopters. He said that the only source of supply for these spare parts during the years of the unjust embargo is the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO.

The source added: This organization twice supplied us with such materials. The first time was in 1994, and the second and last time was in the first half of 1995. A total of 109 parts were supplied last time at a total value of $1,130,864 to operate a number of agricultural helicopters. Occasionally, foreign pilots are asked, under the supervision of the said organization, to fly these helicopters to fight pests in the no-fly zones to the north of Parallel 36 and south of Parallel 32. All of these operations were implemented in accordance with the set schedule.

Iraq: INA Reports on Helicopter Parts Issue

JN0803211996 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2030 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 8 Mar (INA)—In order to refute the media disinformation campaign against Iraq concerning the importation of spare parts for warplanes which were on their way from Poland to Iraq via Queen Alia International Port in Amman, INA has learned that the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO, sent an official request to the UN Sanctions Committee on 18 January under the "no objection" measure which is observed by the committee concerning some requests of a civilian nature.

Information and documents which INA has obtained from its correspondents in New York indicate that in its request, the FAO clarified that it wanted to import equipment and spare parts for agricultural helicopters to fight pests in Iraq, and that the UN Sanctions Committee had earlier approved a similar request.

In its request, the FAO, which is a UN organization, stressed that these equipment and spare parts are designed for MI-2 agricultural helicopters. It said that these spare parts have been and will continue to be under its supervision during the pest-fighting campaign, and that its representative in Iraq monitors their use in coordination with the Iraqi authorities.

The order for the agricultural helicopter spare parts shows that they include plastic pipes for engine oil, navigation lights and covers for them, filters, batteries, a pressure regulator, air compressors, lubricating oils, transmission oils, and other spare parts which help in the spraying of agricultural pesticides.

A responsible source at the Foreign Ministry yesterday asserted that what was stated by a Jordanian Government official spokesman to the effect that the Jordanian authorities seized spare parts for warplanes was untrue. He explained the specifications of the agricultural helicopter spare parts.

The responsible source said that it is not the first time Iraq receives spare parts for these helicopters with the knowledge and approval of the United Nations.

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He also asserted that the supplier of these materials, spare parts, and engines has followed the correct course and received approvals for supplying them for agricultural purposes. He pointed out that the use of this equipment for agricultural purposes by these helicopters, which are now in Iraq, is not banned by the Security Council resolutions, and that each operation to supply this equipment is conducted in public and with the knowledge of the United Nations.

For its part, the Ministry of Agriculture voiced surprise today over some world news agencies reports on this topic.

A Ministry of Agriculture official source told INA that FAO has been the only source for these spare parts during the years of the unjust embargo imposed on Iraq.

To explain facts, and refute the tendentious allegations seeking to harm Iraq and its international reputation, particularly that the Arab and world public opinion as well as many Arab and international quarters have started to call for lifting the unjust embargo imposed on Iraq, we submit these documents to the viewers and readers so that they may become acquainted with these documented facts:

Document No. 1 deals with the letter dated 29 December 1995 from the FAO to the head of the Sanctions Committee asking the committee to approve the importation of equipment and spare parts for agricultural MI-2 helicopters that will take part in a campaign to fight agricultural pests in Iraq.

The second document deals with a letter from the Iraqi Agriculture Ministry to the FAO on the agricultural pests' fighting campaign for the 1996 agricultural season. The letter requests equipment and spare parts to maintain the agricultural helicopters.

The third document explains a letter from the FAO representative in Iraq to the FAO headquarters in Rome noting the Iraqi Agriculture Ministry's request and indicating that he strongly supports the ministry's request to obtain the required equipment.

Documents 4, 5, 6, and 7 clarify the required equipment and spare parts which were approved in the above letters. Among the required parts were plastic pipes for engines' oil, navigation lights and covers for them, filters, batteries, pressure regulators, air compressors, lubricating oils, and transmission oils.

Iraq: Qusayy Saddam Said Training 'New Force'

NC0903172296 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Criminal Qusayy, son of tyrant Saddam, is supervising the training of a new force he set up recently at his father's orders. [words indistinct] selected from among the Republican Guards to defend the capital, Baghdad.

According to sources, criminal Qusayy for the first time selected officers and commanders from outside Tikrit to command the units of this special force. A number of mercenaries and murderers from various governorates and clans have joined these units.

In another development, the 38th brigade of the Republican Guard is currently undergoing [word indistinct] training in the area of (al-Rajjabah) in Karbala'. According to the sources, the brigade is undergoing special training [words indistinct] and modern military equipment to confront adversary moves by the units opposed to the ruling regime, similar to those that occurred in the city al-Ghurayb last May.

Iraq: Husayn Kamil Companion Preparing Report on 'Death Journey'

MM0803162896 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 8 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Bassam Bardarin: "Husayn Kamil's Brother-in-Law Returns To Amman; Baghdad Uncovers Mosad Network"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI - Iraqi opposition sources in Amman have said that Major General 'Izz-al-Din al-Majid, brother-in-law of Gen. Husayn Kamil, returned to Amman yesterday and asked the Jordanian Government to provide the necessary protection for him in view of reports that he is being pursued by Iraqi intelligence. 'Izz-al-Din was a companion of Husayn Kamil when he defected to Jordan, but he refused to return to Iraq with him on the "death journey" recently. He left Amman angrily for Turkey. He returned to Amman the evening before last.

The sources said that Maj. 'Izz-al-Din told those close to him that he was busy preparing a detailed report explaining the circumstances of the return of Gen. Husayn Kamil and his companions to Baghdad, as he was familiar with the contacts, the assurances offered, and the names of the intermediaries. [passage omitted]

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Iraq: Oppositionist Sees 'Loss of Trust' in Saddam

MM0803165696 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 8 Mar 96 p 6

[Interview with Major General Wafiq al-Samara'i, former Iraqi intelligence chief, by Nidal Ma'ruf in Damascus; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Ma'ruf] What are your views on the recent developments, following Husayn Kamil's return to Iraq and his elimination?

[Al-Samara'i] When Husayn Kamil arrived in Jordan, we were totally convinced that he had not been sent by Saddam Husayn, but that there were family disputes and disagreements which had led to the belief that this family and this regime faced a dark future. He wanted to disengage himself from the regime to safeguard his life and his family's, and to establish his leadership. However, he failed to convey a message and adopt a genuine approach toward the opposition forces, because he suffered from a real problem, namely his love of leadership and his desire for despotic domination which made the various opposition forces shun him, especially the trends which believed that his hands were covered with the Iraqi people's blood. I believe that had he behaved naturally and rationally and said that he was disengaging himself from the criminal regime in Iraq, that he wanted to atone for his sins, work for the Iraqi people's good, and dedicate the funds that he brought with him to work for the opposition, then it would have been possible for the opposition as a whole to side with him or agree to cooperate with him. I believe that his return was prompted by two main factors: first, the fact that the opposition was unwilling to work with him extensively, so he had failed in that context; and second, because the regional powers, and especially the Arab states, neither agreed to let him visit them nor wanted to cooperate with him.

However, we were puzzled by his return to Iraq, because he knew Saddam's nature and was aware that he would not forgive him for what he had done.

These events have clearly shown that Saddam Husayn cannot be trusted at all, and they have certainly proved that the regime must change, because such a barbaric regime cannot rule Iraq in such a sensitive area.

With regard to reports that this was just a family and tribal affair, that is a worse excuse, because how could a state with laws allow armed groups of a special security force to storm a house and kill the inside, and how could it agree to hold a state funeral for the suspected killers!

[Ma'ruf] What do you predict the consequences of these events will be for the internal situation in Iraq and the nature of its government?

[Al-Samara'i] Internally there will be increased disengagement from the regime, because it has entirely lost confidence. The idea of Saddam's remaining in power was based on the al-Majid family's control of the vital and sensitive positions in the government, and also on members of the special protection and the companions who are all his cousins. The recent incident will lead to a loss of trust and will stir up hatred among them. Some people say that Saddam will switch allegiance from his family to the party, but that he will fail because he reneged on the party 20 years ago and took a line hostile to the party line. Externally there are indications that the French defense minister has asked for international pressure to be exerted on Baghdad, and there are also statements by many officials indicating that the position outside Iraq is beginning to change gradually against Saddam

[Ma'ruf] You denied previous reports saying that you had asked Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam to open the Iraqi borders to Iraqi citizens. What is the background to this issue?

[Al-Samara'i] In fact there is nothing specific. Some ideas were proposed and discussed, and I believe that the issue is critical and sensitive. The problem is that a correspondent did not report exactly what I said. Someone made this proposal, but it represents his personal view. I did not make any request to that effect. It was just a discussion of a proposal. The Syrian vice president was very cautious and aware of the implications of lifting restrictions on movement across the border in any way. We respect and appreciate the option that Syria sees as appropriate. Moreover, we will not accept any responsibility for the potential outcome of presenting such a proposal, however marginal. The suffering is not only limited to Iraqis inside Iraq but also extends to hundreds of thousands of displaced and destitute people dying outside Iraq. However, I believe that lifting some of the restrictions on movement might help the Iraqi people.

Iraq: Mojahedin-e Khalq Member Assassinated in Baghdad

JN0803192196 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1855 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 8 Mar (INA)—The Iranian Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization office in Baghdad has announced that one of its members, Hamid Reza Rahmani, was assassinated near the organization's central headquarters yesterday. An organization statement accused Iranian regime agents of carrying out this operation.

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Mas'ud Rajavi, chairman of the National Council of the Iranian Resistance, sent cables to the UN secretary general and the UN Security Council in which he called on them to look into the files of the Iranian regime's crimes.

The statement said that the Iranian regime carried out an air raid on the Ashraf Camp four years ago, using 13 Phantom aircraft which dropped tonnes of bombs on the camp.

Iraq: Opposition Warns of 'Foreign Schemes' for Change in Iraq

NC0803153296 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement issued by the mujahidin of the Islamic revolution in Iraq has warned against foreign schemes to carry out change in Iraq. It said Husayn Kamil's defection, return to Iraq, and his subsequent murder by the henchmen of Saddam Husayn's regime were all carried out according to Jordanian-U.S. coordination. The statement said the affair was merely one episode in a more general scheme that will bring more surprises.

The statement added: The Iraqi people have chosen the firm path of jihad and revolution to regain their lost rights.

The statement considered Husayn Kamil's killing a sign that the ruling regime is collapsing.

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Israel: Peres on Summit Significance, 'Arafat Performance

TA1003185996 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 10 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres says that the Sharm al-Shaykh counterterrorism summit has a substantial role in fighting terrorism. He made this comment during an Yig'al Alon Prize award ceremony. Peres said that in implementing the recent steps against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in the Gaza Strip, 'Arafat has started treading the right path. This is what Peres had to say in the ceremony regarding the goals of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit:

[Begin Peres recording] The summit is primarily aimed at garnering a concerted international denunciation of terrorism and expressing a firm determination to fight it. At the same time, the participants will search for routine and practical measures that can be implemented only on the international level, such as drying out Hamas' financial sources and exchanging information on the terrorists. In addition, today it is clear that borders can be computerized — there is such equipment in the world and we will introduce it as well.

I must say that over the last few days 'Arafat has to some extent taken the right course of action. We are demanding that he do more, but I do not want to hand out grades. At the same time, I have to say that mosques have been searched and imams have been detained; hundreds of Hamas leaders have also been detained. A considerable number of Hamas and Islamic Jihad leaders in the West Bank have also been detained. Today the names of three persons who are among the leaders of these gangs were made public. We are demanding that he take responsibility. [end recording]

Israel: Beilin on Prospects for Antiterrorism Summit

TA1003090496 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 10 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Yosi Beilin, minister in the Israeli Prime Minister's Office, by correspondents Mikha Friedman and Ya'el Qovetz; place not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Qovetz] Good morning to Minister Yosi Beilin.

[Beilin] Good morning.

[Qovetz] What is your reply to those who say that the Sharm al- Shaykh conference is really an operation to save the elections for the Labor Party and Shim'on Peres?

[Beilin] I must say that I find this assertion very strange because if the Likud indeed believes that Mr. Peres has the power to gather the support of the entire world behind him, then I would not admit this if I were in their place. This is no simple matter. If Israel has a leader who enjoys the world's support, then perhaps this shows something about that person. Peres is indeed one of the most prominent leaders in the world today. He belongs to a very small group of experienced leaders, and despite the fact that this summit is actually being convened for very different reasons, it is worth noting this point.

[Friedman] Can anything really be achieved in the space of a few short hours in Sharm al-Shaykh, during which the assembled leaders will barely have time even to make their speeches?

[Beilin] At least two very real things can be achieved. First of all, the very fact that for the very first time Israel will participate in a coalition dealing with the struggle against violence perpetrated by what is actually an Arab element. This constitutes a very important precedent for us. The reason for our nonparticipation in the Gulf War was that the Arab states did not want to see us as part of a coalition against Iraq. Today, there is a wall-to-wall coalition against an Arab element. That is one thing. Second, I assume that in the practical sense, it will become possible following this summit, whether formally or informally, to deploy an unprecedented network of regional and superpower cooperation in order to wipe out terrorism in this region. As we know, it is very difficult to quash terrorism through bilateral measures because it is a widespread phenomenon. You have weapons here and explosives over there, while the leadership and money are situated somewhere else. Only a joint, concentrated, and international effort can succeed in this respect.

[Qovetz] But clearly those countries that control the terrorists are not cooperating with this summit.

[Beilin] This is not a summit of terror-sponsoring states, but rather a conference of countries and elements who wish to wipe out terrorism. Therefore, I do not think that the kind of countries you mentioned have any contribution to make.

[Friedman] I take it that when you speak about terror-sponsoring countries, you are also referring to Syria. The United States defines Syria as a country that grants refuge to terrorists and sponsors terrorism.

[Beilin] I am primarily referring to Iran and Libya. True, Syria is also on the list of terror-sponsoring countries,

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but Syria is also engaged in a peace process, which makes for an unusual combination. I can see that Syria is not enthusiastic about participating in this summit, and I can understand why.

[Friedman] Is it true that the United States is making great efforts to persuade the Syrians to participate in the summit? Is there any chance of seeing a Syrian representative there?

[Beilin] I do not know about such pressure, and I really cannot see what kind of contribution can be made by a country that is still on the list of terror sponsors. I think the main efforts must be made by countries that openly and unhesitatingly condemn terrorism, fight against it, and seek to annihilate it. Among themselves, they can create the network that will ultimately eliminate this phenomenon.

[Qovetz] Mr. Beilin, what did you mean when you said that you understand why Syria does not want to participate in the summit?

[Beilin] I must say that Syria's refusal to directly condemn the recent events shows something about this country's attitude toward terrorist attacks. The Syrians always come out with half-hearted statements that implicitly justify the attacks or place them in a bilateral context of violence. Syria does not issue the kind of firm condemnations made by the other Arab states participating at the Sharm al-Shaykh conference.

[Qovetz] Thank you, Minister Yosi Beilin.

Israel: Baraq on 'Main Aim' of Antiterrorism Summit

TA1003081996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 10 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq by correspondent Arye Golan; place not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Golan] Good morning to Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq.

[Baraq] Good morning to you and our listeners.

[Golan] Despite all its good intentions, the conference scheduled to be held in Sharm al-Shaykh on 13 March will not solve the terror problem. How then would you describe the significance of this summit?

[Baraq] I think that the media has already done a very good job in this respect. The summit is no substitute for decisive and vigorous steps by the Duvdevan unit or the Shin Bet in some village where a terrorist or Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] member has to be arrested; however, the conference provides international momentum for the very important efforts involved in fighting terrorism. These efforts will now be directed and focused. The very fact that the leaders of the international community will meet the leaders of the countries around us clearly indicates that the world has decided to deny the terrorists any refuge. It is possible to fight terrorism while at the same time talking peace. The two things must be linked together.

[Golan] Meanwhile, the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigades have announced that they are canceling the cease-fire and resuming the suicide attacks.

[Baraq] The summit will not prevent the next attack if, God forbid, it indeed occurs. Obviously, I hope that we will be able to foil it; however, it sets a direction and will foster cooperation on a practical level in many fields. In a world in which the positions adopted by the leading countries mean a great deal — and this is not merely a formality because the latter are also financing activities in some of the neighboring countries that are participating in the summit — this constitutes a highly important development.

[Golan] Foreign Minister Baraq, let us talk about the Egyptians and then the Syrians. We have just learned that the Egyptians intend to tilt the Sharm al-Shaykh conference against Israel as well. Your Egyptian counterpart 'Amr Musa said that the summit will discuss the aggression on the part of both sides, or in other words, Israeli aggression against the Palestinians. What is your reaction to this Egyptian attempt to balance the agenda?

[Baraq] I prefer not to comment live on Musa's statements before I have the opportunity to carefully peruse the exact text of his remarks. In my opinion, the picture is clear: The conference is being convened against the background of deadly terrorist attacks in which innocent Israelis were killed, and its main aim is to find ways to stop fanatical Islamic terrorism.

[Golan] What about Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, who will apparently not attend the Sharm al-Shaykh summit on 13 March. What does al-Asad's absence say about Syria's desire to make peace with Israel?

[Baraq] I cannot draw any conclusions from this. I can only conclude that Syria is still apparently not prepared to join this effort, dismantle the commands of the terrorist organizations situated on its territory, and actively join the battle against terrorism. I hope that we will see Syria take such steps in the near future; however, this is something for the Syrians to decide upon, and it is part of the peace process. If and when we eventually make progress toward a peace agreement

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with Syria, we expect to see firm action against terrorism as well as in other spheres.

[Golan] So we will continue the negotiations with Syria even under the present conditions?

[Baraq] No, the negotiations are currently suspended on all tracks, and I propose that we first see what kind of progress is made in crushing the Hamas terrorist core and then move on to discuss the negotiations. One does not negotiate or conduct a political process while blood is being spilled on the street.

[Golan] What is your reaction to the proposal made by your Syrian counterpart Faruq al-Shar' to reconvene the Madrid conference.

[Baraq] I have not seen the full text of his proposal. I do not see it as pertinent to this week's main agenda. I attach great importance to the convening of the Sharm al-Shaykh conference. It offers a very good chance of progress on something in which both Israel and the United States have been investing efforts for years: the fostering of widespread international cooperation that will eventually have the power to paralyze terrorism and force it into a corner.

[Golan] Thank you, Foreign Minister Baraq.

Israel: Savir on Hopes for Antiterrorism Summit

TA0903183596 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 9 Mar 96

[Interview with Uri Savir, Israeli Foreign Ministry director general, by Dani Levi in the studio on 9 March; in Hebrew with Arabic subtitles, translated from the Hebrew — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Levi] Mr. Savir, how does Israel regard the antiterrorism conference due to convene in Sharm al-Shaykh on 14 March?

[Savir] It is an unprecedented international and regional event. We have always regarded the terrible phenomenon of terrorism as a threat to peace in the Middle East. It is a security threat not only to Israel, but to every state and every leader who aspires to peace in the region — the Palestinians as a society, the Palestinian Authority [PA], the Egyptians, the Jordanians — as well as to the international arena. We heard what happened in England today [an explosion]. The very fact that such a conference is taking place immediately after the terrible events in Israel is very important in enlisting the world and the Middle East in the war against the phenomenon that endangers the region.

[Levi] What is supposed to come out of the conference? What are the expectations?

[Savir] I assume that the United States — which initiated the conference, and President Clinton, who is heading it — will decide the parameters for a resolution. The very fact that the leaders of the entire region, as well as from the international arena, are coming is a very strong expression of the awareness that we have a joint enemy. The conference will definitely discuss how to deal with that joint enemy, and there will be further cooperation in the wake of the conference.

[Levi] Syria has not yet said whether it will attend the conference. How will a Damascus decision to send a low-level delegate or to boycott the conference be seen?

[Savir] I think every state in the region must decide to which camp it belongs. The conference presents a very clear choice: Are states and leaders on the side of peace and antiterrorism, or opposed to peace and encouraging terrorism. Syria usually tried to remain neutral by advancing the peace process while not denouncing terrorism. For Syria, as well as other states, this conference presents a clear dilemma: Are you for or against? We will await Syria's decision, which will naturally have repercussions on the continuation of the process.

[Levi] What about the continuation of the negotiations with the Palestinians?

[Savir] I think that what is happening today in Palestinian society on the issue of terrorism is an internal matter that will decide which direction the PA will take. It will decide whether it wants to live with terrorism or to uproot it. I believe it is in the PA's interest to uproot terrorism and to continue the peace process with us, and not to permit Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] madmen to curtail the peace process, to murder Israelis, and to murder the Palestinian hope to advance through peaceful means, since they do not really have an alternative. I hope they will prove that is their intention.

[Levi] Do the PA's actions so far prove their understanding of the Israeli demands?

[Savir] They show that the PA understands that it must act for its own sake. There is still a gap between understanding and full implementation. They went part of the way, but that is definitely insufficient. They must end all terrorism by Hamas and Islamic Jihad for us to be able to continue the peace process, which is the heart of the solution for the Palestinians and the region. The buds of the regional and international effort to uproot terrorism are the Sharm al-Shaykh conference.

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Israel: Likud Calls Antiterrorism Conference 'Cover-up'

TA1003125296 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 10 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Orli Azulay-Katz, Bina Barzel, and Hayim Shibi]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] "Cover-up conference" and "save-Peres conference" are the terms being used by the Likud to describe the antiterrorism summit of heads of state that will convene in Sharm al-Shaykh this week. Labor's reaction is one of anger: The Likud is exploiting terrorism for political purposes.

The Likud says: "If the conference embraces 'Arafat instead of coming down hard on him, it is a cover-up conference. This conference will not solve the problem. The heads of state will come and go, but we will remain with the terrorism." The prime minister's bureau says: "The Likud must decide whether terrorism is an issue for the State of Israel or a party matter. We cannot have a situation whereby when it suits the Likud it will present terrorism as an issue on which the people must unite and when it does not suit them, it will become an internal party issue. This conference has supreme importance, and that is why the entire world is taking it so seriously." [passage omitted]

In response to U.S. reports that political elements are trying to get Binyamin Netanyahu invited to the antiterrorism conference, the Likud said last night that they know nothing about such an initiative and that because it is going to be a cover-up conference, the Likud leadership decided that it is not interested in Netanyahu's participating.

Israel: 'Great Importance' Attributed to Counterterror Conference

TA0903123996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Officials in Jerusalem are attributing great importance to the Sharm al-Shaykh counterterrorism conference slated to be held on 13 March. The officials say this conference is just as important as the Madrid conference that launched the peace process. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz was told it is important for the conference to make substantial decisions in the sphere of counterterrorism and international cooperation.

Meanwhile, Morocco's King Hassan II informed Prime Minister Peres that he will be at the Sharm al-Shaykh conference. He said that his country is joining the counterterror struggle.

Israel: Clinton To Participate in 'Special' 13 Mar Cabinet Session

TA1003122096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Major General Oren Shahor, coordinator of government activities in the territories, briefed the cabinet today on the steps taken by the Palestinian Authority [PA] against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that Prime Minister Shim'on Peres clarified that the pressure against the PA would continue. Our political correspondent adds that President Clinton, who is due to arrive in Israel on 13 March, will participate that evening in a special cabinet session on terrorism.

Israel: Sources Confirm 'Intensive' Talks on Memorandum With U.S.

TA1003103696 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 10 Mar 96 p 6

[Report by Avino'am Bar-Yosef and Hemi Shalev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington sources said last weekend that during President Clinton's visit to Jerusalem, he and Prime Minister Shim'on Peres will discuss the possibility of establishing an Israeli-U.S. defense alliance.

Jerusalem sources confirmed that the two countries have been conducting intensive negotiations on upgrading their strategic cooperation, although they sought to lower the expectations: The purpose of the discussions is to finalize a strategic memorandum of understanding, the sources said, without the restrictions that a defense alliance would impose on Israel's freedom of action.

U.S. sources said over the weekend that if the talks on an alliance about to be held in Jerusalem go well, the preparations and the drafting will take several weeks, which will permit the sides to conclude the discussions by the end of April, when the prime minister is due to travel to Washington. According to the U.S. sources, additional Middle East countries are expected to join the alliance in the future.

The sources said that the issue had been brought up as an Israeli initiative in the course of the preparations for Clinton's visit to Jerusalem, although the issue has not been finalized as yet in view of objections in the upper echelons of the Israeli and U.S. defense establishments. The key issues raised in the preliminary administrative work include: mutual defense in the event of an attack; ongoing consultations in the military sphere; coordination in the sphere of operational intelligence; U.S. commitment to match the standard of the IDF's [Israel De-

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fense Forces] equipment and procurement to that of the U.S. Army; and other issues.

The U.S. sources said that the issue was reintroduced last week by Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir in a conversation with senior U.S. officials. Israeli sources noted, however, that the alliance issue had been brought up on several earlier occasions, but that it was rejected by Israel, which feared becoming dependent and losing its freedom of action.

Political sources in Jerusalem confirmed last night that Brigadier General Tzvi Stauber from the IDF's Planning Branch has been conducting secret and intensive talks in recent days with high-ranking Pentagon and State Department officials in connection with the signing of a strategic memorandum of understanding that will considerably upgrade the strategic cooperation between the two countries — albeit not on the level of a defense alliance. Israel has suggested that the memorandum be signed this week, and Jerusalem is anxiously awaiting the U.S. reply.

The Israeli sources said that the issue is now under consideration by the most senior echelons in Washington. If Washington decides favorably, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will stay on in Israel after the Sharm al-Shaykh conference in order to finalize the articles of the memorandum.

Israel: IDF Demolishes Home of Jerusalem Suicide Bomber

TA0803142396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] a few minutes ago demolished the Burqa home of suicide bomber Ra'id 'Abd- al-Karim al-Sharnubi, who was responsible for the attack on the No. 18 line bus in Jerusalem on 3 March. Our correspondent Gay Qotev reports that the residents of the village responded by rioting and are stoning the security forces who are there in large numbers.

Israel: IDF Freezes Preparations for Evacuating Hebron

TA1003114696 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 10 Mar 96 pp A1, A13

[Report by Eytan Rabin]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In line with guidelines from the political echelons, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] has frozen the activities planned for the evacuation of central neighborhoods in Hebron. Ilan Biran, the commander of the Central command, has confirmed this. At the same time, a senior military source in the Central Command announced that Hebron's evacuation is planned for 26 March, and it is believed that another discussion will take place on this issue next week and that then it will be finally decided whether the IDF will withdraw from Hebron.

A senior military source in the Central Command explained to HA'ARETZ that, in fact, the problem is not whether Hebron is to be evacuated. "From our viewpoint, Hebron's evacuation is a matter of four hours. The grave problem is the nature of relations between the settlers who will remain in the Jewish community in Hebron and the Palestinians after the evacuation takes place."

Internal documents prepared by the Central Command's senior officers point to a dire scenario with regard to relations between the Palestinians and settlers in Hebron. Within the framework of this scenario, Central Command officers define relations between Palestinians and Israelis in Hebron as impossible. In the documents, the officers note that the Palestinian and Jewish populations live together on a single territory in impossible physical density, and that shooting incidents are feared. For instance, the military source fears a situation in which a Palestinian policeman might confront a settler in Hebron, a situation that could easily evolve into an all-out firing incident between settlers and Palestinians, especially policemen from the buffer zone. The military source defined such incidents as unavoidable.

According to the military source, from the IDF's viewpoint, the plan is to station large numbers of troops along the buffer zone between Jews and Palestinians. Likewise, if and when Hebron's evacuation is decided on, Israel will demand to position international observers on the Palestinian side in accordance with the agreement. According to the Central Command's documents, large numbers of soldiers will be necessary to separate the settlers from the Palestinians.

IDF officers believe that after the evacuation, Hebron will also turn into a safe haven for wanted people. [passage omitted]

Israel: IDF Arrests 3 Villagers Suspected of 'Terrorist' Activity

TA1003070296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] is continuing its activity against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. Early this morning, the IDF operated in Hebron, Halhul, and five villages in Judaea and Samaria. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that three men suspected of hostile terrorist activity were

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arrested in the village of Salfit and in the Tulkarm District. Inflammatory material was discovered in villages in the Hebron area and in the Ramallah District town of Bi'r Nabala.

Israel: Navy Blockades Gaza To Prevent Escape of Fugitives

TA0903120596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The army has arrested three Palestinians in the Janin area suspected of hostile terrorist activity. They were taken for questioning by security forces. The crackdown is part of the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] campaign against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] following the recent bomb attacks.

The closure on Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza has been extended to include the Mediterranean waters off Gaza. The Israeli Navy imposed the blockade yesterday, which will continue until further notice. It said the blockade was to prevent the escape by sea of wanted fugitives from PLO-ruled Gaza.

Israel: Internal Closure Lifted To Enable Stocking Up on Essentials

TA1103060196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Israeli army will this morning lift the internal closure imposed on the territories. The internal closure will be lifted for 12 hours on the West Bank in order to enable residents to stock up on essentials.

The general closure on the territories will remain in force and Palestinian residents will not be allowed to enter Israel.

Israel: Israeli Arabs Protest 'Economic Siege' Against Territories

TA1003111996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Representatives of the Israeli Arab community are demanding that the government lift what they describe as the economic siege and strangulation of the residents in the territories. Our correspondent Yo'el Dar reports that the demand was raised at an emergency meeting in Umm-al-Fahm with the participation of representatives of HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality] and the Islamic Movement. A demonstration was also held in Nazareth.

Israel: Police's Chief Sapper on 'Terrorist' Explosives

TA0803164896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israel Police's chief sapper said that laboratory tests show that since the Bet Lid terrorist attack, the suicide bombers have been using explosives prepared from antitank mines used by the Egyptian and Italian armies and that the explosives were probably prepared in the Gaza Strip.

Bottles containing fuel and 5 kg of nails have been added to the mines to bolster the strength of the explosion.

Our police affairs correspondent Aviv Bushinsky reports that contrary to reports by senior Palestinian police officers that the explosives were operated with mines used by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces], the police chief explosives expert said that the mines are used by foreign armies.

Commander Arik said that a single person coordinated the four latest attacks. The procedure is that the suicide terrorist leaves for his mission carrying a military duffel bag and two switches connected to two 9-volt batteries. When the terrorist presses the switches, it sets off an explosion without any need to open the bag.

Israel: Cabinet Briefed on Economic Deterioration in Territories

TA1003103296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This morning, the cabinet received a briefing on the situation in the territories. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that Major General Oren Shahor, the coordinator of government activities in the territories, said that the economic situation in the territories has deteriorated as a result of the closure and that civil institutions are having difficulties operating. The government was also presented with Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal's plan to combat car thefts.

In a consultation at the Prime Minister's Office, it was decided to bring another 16,500 foreign workers into Israel: 13,000 construction workers and 3,500 agricultural laborers. Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer's demand to bring in another 7,000 foreign workers will be discussed in the near future.

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Israel: Chief of Staff on Dealing With PA, Hamas

TA0903132096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0805 GMT 9 Mar 96

[Interview with Amnon Shahaq, Israel Defense Forces chief of staff, by Karmela Menashe and Yo'el Nir; place and date not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Menashe] Lieutenant General Amnon Shahaq, the prime minister and defense minister has declared war against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. What in IDF [Israel Defense Forces] activity has changed since this declaration?

[Shahaq] Since that moment the entire IDF is dealing with one thing only: namely, the struggle against terrorism generally and Hamas in particular. This has affected all IDF activity; forces dealing with various kinds of activities have been diverted to deal with this issue and have been dealing with it since. Until we feel that the problem has been sufficiently dealt with, we will continue.

[Nir] Critics claim this war is being conducted for the media and that on the ground nothing new is happening.

[Shahaq] Look, you are right — this is indeed what is being said. I think that in a state of war critics should be more thoughtful and restrained. There is a difference between war as we know it from the movies and our past experience, and this kind of counterterror war. The objectives in a counterterror war are different and to a certain extent much more difficult to attain — mainly from the intelligence point of view, seeing that the terrorists are hiding among the population and that when they go underground they do everything to vanish without a trace. They, as well as everyone aiding them and their infrastructure, must be dealt with. Consequently this is a different form of war, which is usually conducted by other means. When we finally get to the stage of using our power, that will be the simple part — because we are very powerful, much more than is needed for dealing with this form of terrorism. Those who fail to realize that this is a different form of war, however, perhaps fail to understand how it is being conducted.

[Menashe] The prime minister has said that the head of the snake is in Gaza. Why are you avoiding entering Area A if you can reach it there?

[Shahaq] I do not think we are avoiding this. If it becomes necessary to go in, we will enter Area A. This must be done, however, when we know where we are going and what we want to achieve. If this terrorism is dealt with by the Palestinian Authority [PA] in a manner that puts our minds at ease, we will not have to go in. In every other situation, if it becomes necessary to deal with terrorism in Area A as well as anywhere else, we will come in and deal with this terrorism — and no letters, colors, and other definitions on the maps are relevant here.

[Nir] One has the impression that a lot of forces are being used for guard and protection duties in our cities, while not enough is being done against the terrorists and their infrastructure.

[Shahaq] Go to Judaea and Samaria and see for yourself. Wherever we think we will find Hamas we will enter and deal with it. We have already done this and will continue to do so when we learn of additional places. This week a lot of locations have been dealt with, and more will be dealt with as we learn of new places.

[Nir] People are asking why we have remembered to do this only this week.

[Shahaq] Everybody is wise after the fact. This recent spate of attacks in the last two weeks require us to implement measures that we have not implemented so far.

[Nir] People are claiming that after the Oslo accords we lost areas that could have provided us with important intelligence. It is also being said that since Oslo we have been dealing more with defensive measures than an offensive against terrorists.

[Shahaq] Look, a lot of claims are being made, and there are also quite a lot of objective problems. After the Oslo accords there was one major change: The areas evacuated by us were occupied by the PA with its security and police branches that are supposed to deal with terrorism. From more than one respect our ability to operate in the areas transferred to the PA has certainly changed. Today, however, we are facing a situation which, as far as terrorism is concerned, is unprecedented in its severity. This has created a new situation that we cannot ignore. From the beginning it was clear that without an ongoing treatment of terrorism, the latter would be able to rear its head again.

[Nir] Was there a letup in the treatment of terrorism?

[Shahaq] The PA has foiled attacks when it was confronted with imminent ones. As far as I can read the situation, however, it is a fact that the Hamas military and political arms have continued to exist and operate. I cannot say whether the number of Hamas members has increased or decreased since we left Gaza, but their operational ability — mainly in terms of perpetrating such suicide attacks as we encountered last week — is different than what it was two years ago, not that there were no attacks two years ago coming from both Gaza and the West Bank.

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[Nir] Are we not commanding 'Arafat to deal with terrorism in our place?

[Shahaq] What do you mean by commanding 'Arafat? If he is shouldering responsibility, it has to be a comprehensive responsibility. You cannot split this responsibility and leave 'Arafat with only the duties of representing the population, collecting taxes, and receiving honors. Part of the responsibility is to fight terrorism. It is inconceivable that in an area where he is in charge of the population he avoids the responsibility of dealing with those who operate against what he himself terms his own interests. We, however, are the main targets of this terrorism, and I believe it is his duty to deal with this problem — and this goes beyond the agreement between us.

[Nir] This is all well and good in principle, but....

[Shahaq, interrupting] This has nothing to do with principles. Either it works....

[Nir, interrupting] In fact, however, it is not working. It is a fact that the attacks are continuing and that the head of the snake is still in his area.

[Shahaq] The head of the snake was there before 'Arafat came; we tried to deal with it by fighting against terrorism. This terrorism was not born the day 'Arafat arrived. In several respects, however — mainly in whatever relates to explosives — the terrorists apparently find it easier to operate since 'Arafat's arrival. He is obligated to deal with this situation. We certainly cannot accept a situation in which the PA — which by its very existence makes it difficult for us to deal with problems in the areas under its control — fails to deal with terrorism effectively. We cannot accept such a situation.

[Nir] This situation, however, has been going on for several months now.

[Shahaq] Why was there no talk about this issue several months ago? Well, apparently at that time many people believed we could deal with things differently. In addition, during that time the PA conducted several operations which all those in the know considered more serious and professional than previously. Today, however, we are certainly in a test period. Those who have already reached final conclusions and believe that there is absolutely no chance that 'Arafat and his people will manage to deal with the situation apparently have a very clear picture in their minds. Now they simply have to say what we should do and what are the ramifications of the PA's ceasing to exist for all intents and purposes. They have to decide what are the advantages and disadvantages of this situation, and whether this conclusion is correct and wise.

[Nir] Do you agree with outgoing Intelligence Branch chief Uri Sagi, who has said we have an intelligence problem?

[Shahaq] At present we have a problem with dealing with terrorism — which has managed to harm us without our being able to eradicate it. Part of this problem has to do with intelligence. We will certainly have to do more in this respect as well.

[Nir] One gets the impression that the prime minister first declared a war and that the planning stage came only later.

[Shahaq] What do you mean by planning stage? One would think that the counterterror war started just last Sunday or two weeks ago. This is not the case. This is an ongoing war. When there are no painful attacks the public is not aware of what is happening, and people think that nothing is being done. The reason that no attacks have occurred for so many days, however, is that thousands of people are dealing with the counterterror war in order to prevent these attacks. When they do happen, however, we must examine why; we must learn and draw the necessary conclusions in order to operate differently and better so that their recurrence is prevented.

[Nir] Does the capture of this latest squad — the Dayf squad — solve the concrete and immediate problem, or is there fear of more attacks by other squads?

[Shahaq] We did not catch Dayf himself, therefore the squad was not annihilated. Some of the people were caught and this is very important, because I hope through them it will be possible to reach more people. There are more free people around who have the know-how and the ability, and who in my opinion want to carry out more attacks.

[Nir] Is there an agreement between the PLO and Hamas not to carry out attacks in the PA areas but only in Israel?

[Shahaq] To the best of my knowledge there is no agreement between the PLO and Hamas. An attempt to reach such an agreement failed.

[Menashe] Did you receive any information according to which Hamas is politically interested in what is happening in Israel?

[Shahaq] I am not dealing with Hamas' thoughts, only in the war against it.

[Nir] What are its motives?

[Shahaq] I am not interested in its motives. We are fighting Hamas no matter what its motives are. Hamas

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wants to kill our people; I do not care why. Incidentally, I do not think Hamas has only one motive. Hamas wants to kill Israelis because it has its goals. Hamas killed Israelis before the elections in Israel were declared. Even if the elections were behind us, Hamas would not have declared an end to the attacks. I believe there is no point in such talk. I think we are starting to get confused here as to who is the enemy and where our efforts should be directed. I think people are dealing here with strange things.

[Menashe] In Lebanon, four soldiers have been killed and nine wounded.

[Shahaq] We have a cruel and difficult war against terrorism in Lebanon. There are a lot of successes, but usually people do not deal with these successes. When we suffer casualties, however, everybody suddenly remembers that there is a war going on in Lebanon. The soldiers who are engaged in this war know that it is an ongoing, daily war, and they are engaged in it constantly and very successfully. Sometimes, however, the terrorists succeed and we suffer casualties. This is part of the war.

[Nir] Can we expect more of the same kind of Hamas terrorism in Israeli cities?

[Shahaq] At present the closure is preventing the Palestinians in the territories from entering Israel. This is the present way of preventing all those living there from entering Israeli cities.

[Nir] Is this a closure, or strangulation?

[Shahaq] This is a way of preventing the terrorists...[pauses] If it were possible to strangle the terrorists I would do this as well. We are preventing the terrorists from entering Israel. It is clear that while preventing the entry of terrorists — who do not go around carrying placards announcing themselves or donning uniforms, but rather mingle in crowds of thousands — those coming to Israel to work and provide a livelihood for their families are suffering as well. This is the price being paid by a very large Palestinian population for the operation of terrorists from its midst.

Israel: Palestinians 'Sharply' Protest New Checkpoint Procedures

TA1003101296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] There is a serious dispute between the Palestinians and Israel with regard to the new inspection procedures planned for the Qarni checkpoint in preparation for its reopening this week. Facilities designed to separate Palestinian and Israeli drivers have been built, electronic surveillance measures have been installed, and it was decided that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] would guard the Palestinian side of the checkpoint and inspect the entering Palestinians.

Frayj al-Khayri, the head of the Palestinian civil committee, sharply protested against the new regulations, but a senior Southern Command officer said there would be no compromise on security issues.

Israel: Baraq on U.S.-Israeli Antiterrorism Efforts

TA0803194296 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 8 Mar

[Interview with Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq by Yisra'el Segal in the studio — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Segal] I understand that some development will most likely take place during President Clinton's visit to Israel. Can you tell us about it?

[Baraq] There will be an endeavor to get most states in the region and the important states in the world to join the regional struggle against terrorism. However, Israel and the United States are prepared for the possibility of signing a memorandum of understanding between them, which will include all the issues involved in fighting terrorism.

[Segal] Will the memorandum be discussed and signed during President Clinton's visit here?

[Baraq] It will be discussed and looked into by then, and if necessary, it will be signed.

[Segal] Does it provide us with any special instruments to fight terrorism?

[Baraq] We received this week, at 12 hour's notice, equipment to detect explosives at as a result of the prime minister's conversation with President Clinton after it had been in the works for over a year. Other equipment is coming, there is intelligence cooperation, and ways are being sought to search out the sources of funding for the terrorists. There is a large array of activities, which a signed memorandum of understanding can help to advance.

[Segal] What is the practical significance of the memorandum, which will most likely be signed during President Clinton's visit?

[Baraq] The two states put into a formal agreement their operational cooperation in the war against terrorism. In that sense, it is a very important development. The United States is a superpower, and it has the ability to coordinate activities and move others to take necessary actions. The ability to act against terrorism can improve greatly if this week's discussions and studies lead to the signing of a memorandum of understanding.

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[Segal] Are we talking about intelligence, satellites?

[Baraq] Intelligence measures of all kinds, including those that cannot be divulged: tracing the movements of funds, and very modern equipment which the United States has due to its war against drugs and other international elements — genuine coordination against Middle East terrorism.

[Segal] The conference will be held on Wednesday [13 March], probably in Sharm al-Shaykh. It is Wednesday?

[Baraq] President Clinton and some of the others will probably arrive on Tuesday night and the conference will take place on Wednesday.

[Segal] Will some of the Arab states participate?

[Baraq] I would not want to divulge details. I suggest we wait and see. I anticipate an impressive participation, which in itself will signal the depth of the change the Middle East is undergoing in the awareness of the need for all to fight terrorism.

[Segal] Is the conference not something declarative and cosmetic, or will it come up with practical resolutions?

[Baraq] In my view it is very impressive when the leadership of the free world and the leaderships of the region — I assume that many of the leaders of the region will come — convene and declare their intention to deal with the issue in a coordinated fashion. It relays a direction for taking action, which is very important. It does not, of course, replace our actions by our own people against terrorist targets here. We do not expect the conference's participants to do that for us.

[Segal] Yesterday, one of the leading Likud leaders said here unofficially that the very fact that the conference is convening smells of support for Labor in the elections.

[Baraq] I do not think anything is more natural following the 10 days we have suffered, with the price we have paid. Anything that can be done on the operational, intelligence, and political levels must be done. The timing has nothing to do with elections.

[Segal] Not by the Americans either?

[Baraq] I tell the Likud that the antiterrorism war is not a political matter in Israel. Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] does not choose its victims according to party affiliation, and those among us who fight them are also not chosen on a political basis. More than once, I have told world leaders: Terrorism, as we now know it, not only in the Middle East, but everywhere, will disappear only when an all-embracing international alliance — of the kind that rid the world of piracy on the open seas several hundred years ago — is formed to prevent terrorists from receiving refuge anywhere in the world. That will happen since the new world realizes the toll this phenomenon is exacting.

[Segal] Let us go back to earlier in the week. Did the government not lose its senses in the days after the terrorist attacks?

[Baraq] Not at any time. The prime minister is operating in a coolheaded manner and with inner calm based on a great deal of experience in these kinds of situations dating back to the 1970's when he dealt with terrorism in Lebanon and the war against aircraft hijackings. The entire government is functioning in a very coolheaded way. On the contrary, it is not being swayed by various proposals put to it. What have we done? We formed a counterterrorism command with the best minds in Israel: Shin Bet head 'Ami Ayalon, Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq, Israel Police Chief Asaf Hefetz, IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch commander General Moshe Ya'alon — people who for dozens of years personally led dozens of actions, some of which are still not known, against terrorism.

[Segal] But there were signs of hysteria in the street. Who is in charge of the home front in the government?

[Baraq] The outbreaks of public anger are natural and human. I would not suggest that we set a standard whereby people do not get upset when blood is spilled in the street, but there is a big difference between that and saying that the government lost its senses. When I observe the reactions of the past two weeks, I say that we have a very strong nation. I believe that we are coolheaded. Hamas must not decide for us our method of operation or the outcome of the elections, or anything related to those matters. Under no circumstances should we give in to that type of terrorism. Terrorism is aimed not only at killing people, but at undermining our self-assurance and our ability to be steadfast. Because we intend to live here forever and because we do not live in North America or West Europe, under no circumstances should we give in to terrorism.

[Segal] Looking back — I know that this is a tough question — was the liquidation of the Engineer [Yahya 'Ayyash] not a mistake? The fact is that prior to his murder there were seven months of quiet. As soon as he was liquidated, terrorism broke out?

[Baraq] I do not want to refer to that directly. We never said we liquidated the Engineer, but his death, like the liquidation of others — unless they are arrested and put behind bars — is the order of the day in the war against terrorism. 'Arafat has the ability to detain these people. We will not carry out operations inside his prisons. But terrorist activity was not about to stop....

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[Segal, interrupting] Even if the Engineer had not been liquidated?

[Baraq] Undoubtedly.

[Segal] We gave the Palestinian Authority [PA] today the name of the person leading the terrorist attacks. By the way, why do we not disclose his name?

[Baraq] There are a number of people in Gaza who are the leading activists of Hamas' terrorist arm. We expect the PA to arrest them and put them behind bars.

[Segal] And if they don't?

[Baraq] 'Arafat and his people know that we intend to see that they stop operating. If the PA does not act, I believe that with time — we currently have operational intelligence problems — then we will feel free to act everywhere in any situation against the terrorist leaders.

[Segal] Including their liquidation?

[Baraq] Everywhere and in any situation. I do not want to go into methods of operation or times.

[Segal] In the existing situation, do we not need a full-time defense minister?

[Baraq] I believe we have a very good defense minister. Israel has known tougher times: During the toughest times in the War of Independence, the prime minister was also defense minister. During the toughest days of the intifadah, Yitzhaq Rabin was prime minister and defense minister. Having been relatively close to Rabin, I know that such a setup is good and effective. Shim'on Peres is defense minister for the second time. In several months, it will be the 20th anniversary of the Entebbe operation when Peres was defense minister the first time.

[Segal] You were almost appointed defense minister this week.

[Baraq] The journalists appointed me.

[Segal] Somebody left a message on your office assistant's beeper that you were about to become defense minister.

[Baraq] I do not take such things seriously; they are childish games by irresponsible people. I have full trust in the defense minister, and I am sure that the Israeli public can sleep peacefully. The Defense Ministry is in good hands. Furthermore, since the Shin Bet, which comes under the prime minister; the IDF [Israel Defense Forces], which falls under the defense minister; and the Israel Police and the Border Police, which are the responsibility of the public security minister, are responsible for fighting terrorism, such a situation is in some ways more efficient. It does not mean that different realities are not possible, but the current situation is good and works well.

Israel: Baraq Meets With French, German Foreign Ministers on Terror

TA1003112796 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 10 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by JERUSALEM POST Staff]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The battle against terror requires close cooperation within the international community, French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette said in Tel Aviv on Friday [8 March].

De Charette, who plans to attend the international conference on terrorism this week in Sharm al-Shaykh, also announced that France will send a team of terrorism experts to Israel, in response to a request for assistance from Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Palestinian Authority [PA] President Yasir 'Arafat.

"France knows what terrorism is and lives under its threat, and can contribute its share," he said.

De Charette, who arrived with his German counterpart Klaus Kinkel, said he was here to express France's "warm support for the Israeli government and the Jewish people. The French are shocked to the core at the tragedy that Israel has endured in recent days." He added that "the peace process is in jeopardy" due to the recent wave of terror attacks.

Meanwhile, Italian Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli announced yesterday that the European Union will send a top level delegation to Iran, Libya and Syria to tell the governments they must condemn terrorism. "They will try to impress upon them the idea that it is impossible that they can go on not condemning these terroristic attacks," Agnelli told a news conference at an informal meeting of EU foreign ministers in Palermo.

[Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 10 March carries a related report by Aluf Ben and 'Amira Hess on page A3, adding that: "The French and German foreign ministers told Foreign Minister Baraq, following their brief visit to Gaza, that PA Chairman Yasir 'Arafat 'is in bad shape, and he is aware of his grave situation,' to which Baraq replied: 'I am not certain it is true that he knows how serious his position is.'

["The European ministers informed Baraq that 'Arafat was ready to collaborate with Israel against terror; 'however, he has a problem: It is not easy for him to arrest these people.' Baraq replied: "'Arafat is taking advantage of his visitors' lack of information. He knows who the fugitives are and where they are hiding, and if

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they are not there, he knows where they might have gone.'"

[The report further adds: "De Charette and Kinkel told Baraq that the peace process must be saved. Baraq replied: 'Undoubtedly, 'Arafat must not be crushed in the course of the extermination of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. 'Arafat is the partner for future negotiations, and there is no one but him. Yet he should understand that this was the last straw, that he does not have much time, and that unless he acts quickly, Israel will act as soon as it can.'"]

Israel: Attorney General Says Defense Actions Allowed in PA Areas

TA1003122496 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 10 Mar 96 p A5

[Report by Gid'on Alon]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Attorney General Mikha'el Ben-Ya'ir handed Prime Minister Shim'on Peres at the end of the week a legal opinion that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] can carry out defense activity in Area A (which is under the Palestinian Authority's [PA] control) in order to prevent terrorism. Copies of the legal opinion were sent to Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq and Justice Minister David Liba'i. The attorney general notes that IDF activity in Area A to prevent terrorism is not a violation of the Oslo accord. The opinion is based on two aspects:

— Israeli activity in Area A conforms with the interim accord. Under the Oslo accord, Israel kept the right to prevent terrorist activities from Area A if the PA does not fulfill its undertaking under the agreement.

— Under international law, each state has the right to self-defense. That means that Israel has the right to take military action against terrorists on the condition that it is aimed at averting danger to state security or ensuring the safety of the inhabitants and that there is no other way to prevent it through the elements controlling the area.

In addition, it transpires that the government has so far not approved deportations, especially because senior elements in the legal system have expressed doubts about whether the deportation of relatives of suicide bombers and those who dispatch them will withstand appeals to the High Court of Justice. [passage omitted]

Israel: Unidentified Caller Names Islamic Jihad Tel Aviv Bomber

TA0903184096 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 9 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] An unidentified person called Israel Television Channel 1 in Arabic and announced in the name of the Islamic Jihad that the suicide bomber in this week's Tel Aviv attack was 'Ummar Siyam of Gaza's Sabra neighborhood. The caller claimed that the bomber carried on his body 17 kg of TNT. He warned Yasir 'Arafat against further detentions.

Israel: PM's Office, Sharon Deny Claims of Cabinet Portfolio Offers

TA0803210596 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 8 Mar 96

[Menashe Raz video report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ari'el Sharon asked for the defense portfolio during this week's contacts to set up a national unity government, Minister Yosi Sarid said in an interview to be broadcast on Channel 1 on 9 March. Minister Sarid said that the contacts on a unity government were very advanced.

[Begin recording] [Sarid] Ari'el Sharon wanted to be defense minister, but received a negative response to that. Other possibilities were raised and to those he did not receive a negative response.

[Correspondent Menashe Raz] What do you mean by other possibilities or offers?

[Sarid] Other proposals for portfolios cropped up, such as public security minister. I believe that with all due humility I can say that Meretz and I personally helped our colleagues in Labor to rescue themselves from the embarrassment. [end recording]

In response, the prime minister's bureau said that no cabinet reshuffle was considered.

Knesset Member Sharon said: Minister Sarid once again makes up baseless things. I did not demand anything, I did not discuss the issue with anybody, and I never offered myself.

Israel: Clinton Criticized for 'Intervention' in Election Process

TA1003072996 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 10 Mar 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Theater of the Absurd"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime ministers, like plainer mortals, are entitled to indulge their hobbies — provided

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they neither cause harm nor raid the public till. Unfortunately, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres's hobby — producing grandiose international conferences — is often both costly and harmful. That he tends to attach monumental historic importance to these productions turns them from merely embarrassing tableaux into the theater of the absurd.

Perhaps the most spectacular of these farces was the Casablanca conference, touted at the time as the historic curtain raiser to the New Middle East. Its only achievement was to prove that the old Middle East is not only alive and thriving, but as inhospitable to Israel as ever. The conference's most illuminating document was a booklet of proposed regional projects issued by the Egyptian government, a regime with which Israel has had peace for 17 years. The name Israel never appeared in the book — neither in the text nor in maps of the region. And just to make sure that Egypt's message was not lost, President Husni Mubarak later referred to the whole concept of a New Middle East as "frightening."

Now, too, Peres has called for an international conference, ostensibly to discuss the scourge of terrorism and ways to combat it. And again he let it be known that the conference is a great historic milestone, as important as the opening of the Madrid conference in 1991, which launched the current "peace process."

It requires no special penchant for cynicism to determine that the real purpose of the conference has nothing to do with the war on terrorism. Mubarak has called it a conference to save the "peace process" — the standard Egyptian euphemism for Israel's withdrawal to its "natural size," the 1949 armistice lines.

Washington is even blunter. According to the NEW YORK TIMES, "senior American officials said they hoped that such a broad gathering, and Mr. Clinton's participation in it, would... help to strengthen Mr. Peres's political standing and his efforts to persuade Israelis to persist in the peace efforts. It would also be a showcase for Mr. Clinton's peacemaking efforts in an election year."

Clearly, then, this is nothing more than a rescue operation for two leaders — Peres and Yasir 'Arafat - in whom the US administration has invested substantial political capital. As such, it is a barely disguised intervention in Israel's election process.

It would be naive to pretend that this is the first time Washington is interfering in Israeli elections. Every American ambassador, including the current Martin Indyk, has shown little inhibition about advertising Washington's preferences in Israel's political races. One such ambassador continued the practice even after he became ambassador to the UN, when he asked Abba Eban to persuade one of the haredi [ultra-Orthodox] parties to bolt Likud and help Peres form a government. Conversely, some Israeli leaders have been unable to resist voicing their preferences in American presidential contests. In 1972, Yitzhaq Rabin virtually endorsed Richard Nixon, and 'Ezer Weizman tried to help Jimmy Carter get re- elected in 1980. But such mutual interventions were usually restricted to the ministerial or ambassadorial level. It is rare that the president of the US puts the prestige of his office on the line by openly and actively helping an Israeli candidate.

True, Clinton's predecessor George Bush was such an exception. He made clear that Israel's access to loan guarantees would be available only if it voted for Labor, and the implied threat undoubtedly helped Rabin get elected. But what Clinton is doing is far riskier. To help "his" candidate, he is openly endorsing a policy which a majority of Israel's Jewish population deems responsible for the terrorist carnage of the past 31 months. It is one thing to support a "peace process" in the abstract. It is quite another to urge Israel to continue its withdrawal from areas vital to its defense.

Nor can the president's participation in a conference which is bound to encourage terrorism add to America's prestige. What best betrays the nature of this gathering is Mubarak's invitation to Syria, one of the four leading sponsors of terrorism, to join the proceedings. Even Iran has expressed interest in participating, for it, too — according to its ambassador in Bonn — is a victim of terrorism.

Surely, if Syria is invited there is no reason to keep Iran out — particularly since the Europeans are falling over each other trying to sign commercial contracts with the Tehran regime. The event is beginning to resemble the conference on human rights once convened by the Soviet regime, which only helped the Soviet oppressors, not the victims of oppression.

Islamic terrorism is indeed a world problem, and to combat it efficiently, Western governments should collaborate on the intelligence and operational levels. To make it a super-summit extravaganza and invite dictatorial regimes to the show is to mock the deadly serious task facing Western civilization.

Nor should it be forgotten that terrorism against Israel is not just a sister-act of the terrorist campaign in Algeria and Egypt. It is part of a war against the Jewish state whose goals are shared by many of the participants in Wednesday's production at Sharm al-Shaykh: The only possible result of such a conference is that odious dictatorships, some of which do not

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allow their emissaries to set foot in Israel, will attain Western approval by pretending that they, too, are against blowing up buses.

It is nothing less than shameful that such a deception is initiated by the Israeli government, and sponsored by the world's greatest democracy.

Israel: Rallies for, Against Peace Process Held 'Throughout' Nation

TA0803161396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Demonstrators both for and against the peace process were out in force today. In Tel Aviv's Rabin Square, about 1,000 people gathered in support of Prime Minister Peres, and more gathered in front of the Defense Ministry. Among those taking part were Reserve Generals Shlomo Lahat and Yanosh Ben-Gal and Knesset Member Dedi Zucker. A group of several hundred pro-government demonstrators gathered outside the home of Prime Minister Peres, and at the Mahanayim intersection in the Galilee, hundreds of kibbutz and moshav members turned out in support of the government. Alongside them was a group of Bedouin residents of the area, also in favor of the government.

Other pro-government demonstrations were held at Kefar Tavor and 'Afula, and at road intersections throughout the country, right-wing activists held up banners with the slogan "Safety is in the national camp." The demonstrations were held in an orderly manner.

And a demonstration against the recent terror attacks was this morning held at the Arab village of Biddiya near Ari'el. The demonstrators said that the Palestinian people reject the path of violence and choose the way of peace with Israel. The villagers pointed out, however, that the closure imposed on the territories is likely to bring about further attacks because of the mounting economic hardship on inhabitants. The demonstration was organized by an Israeli building contractor who employs many Palestinian workers from Biddiya.

Israel: Savir—Talks With Syria Only After Balance 'Restored'

TA1103055896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir says Syria will have to clarify its position on terror before negotiations with Israel can be resumed.

Speaking in Jerusalem, Savir said the talks with Damascus would only be resumed after, as he put it, the balance is restored in the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

Israel: Minister Sarid Cited on Dangers of Likud Return to Power

NC0903115296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0740 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Mar (MENA)—Israeli Environment Minister Yosi Sarid stressed the importance of a collective confrontation of international terrorism.

In statements to AL-AHRAM published today, he said that the chances of winning in a confrontation with the phenomenon of international terrorism will be very slim if the confrontation is done on an individual basis.

Sarid underlined Israel's constant belief in Egypt's leading and principal role in the region even during the times when there were crises between the two countries. He said that Egypt is the most important country in the region and has a great capability to save it and rectify its course. He added that Israel will present proposals to the summit on saving peace and fighting terrorism requiring the cooperation of officials in various countries.

Asked whether the participation of Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu would make the Israeli security image more positive, Sarid stressed that the image will be much worse. He noted that if Netanyahu becomes prime minister, he will restore bloodshed and make it a daily event, as was the case during the intifadah.

Sarid expressed hopes that the Israeli public will be wise and responsible enough to reelect Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. He said that recent opinion polls show that Peres and Netanyahu are neck and neck, though the current critical times in Israel must be taken into consideration. He added: If this is the case when the situation is very grim, then it means Peres will win big. He said: I pray to God to save us from Netanyahu and his colleagues, such as Ari'el Sharon and Rafa'el Eytan, becoming prime ministers. That will be the day of terrorism and extremism.

Asked what Israel's stand will be if the opposition Palestinian groups succeed in preventing an amendment to the National Charter, Sarid said: The stand will be very clear. We will halt the peace process completely.

Israel: 'Diplomatic Incident' as Kinkel Group Stopped at Checkpoint

TA0903121396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A diplomatic incident occurred during German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel's visit

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to Israel. Minister Kinkel lodged a protest with the Israeli Foreign Ministry after the personnel manning the District Liaison and Coordination Office [DCO] delayed him at the Erez checkpoint for approximately half an hour upon returning from a visit to Yasir 'Arafat in Gaza. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the Erez DCO personnel allowed the visiting minister's car through, but insisted on checking his entourage. The latter refused to submit to the check and a Border Police force blocked their way.

After consultations with high-level Israeli officials, the entourage was allowed through without being checked. The Erez DCO spokesman told our correspondent that the security checks were aimed at ascertaining that no extremist elements were using the passage of the entourage for infiltrating into Israel to carry out attacks. The spokesman complained about the fact that the visiting diplomats failed to show understanding for Israel's security problems.

Israel: Article Examines CIA's Use of Journalists' Cover

TA0803182796 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 7 Mar 96 B4

[Article by 'Aqiva Eldar: "CNN or CIA Correspondent"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Stansfield Turner, the CIA director between 1977 and 1981, admitted to a WASHINGTON POST correspondent that in exceptional circumstances the agency digresses from the rule banning agents from hiding behind the cover of a journalist. He recalled that in November 1979, shortly after Muslim fanatics took over the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, an American journalist conferred with CIA officials in the Iranian capital in an attempt to find out how he could contribute to rescuing the 53 American hostages.

Turner said that in view of the concern for the lives of the Americans, he would not have hesitated to use the journalist's services. However, the situation changed at the last moment, and the agency did not take up the offer.

There is nothing new in that story. Turner recalled that in a meeting he held with editors in 1980, he found that three years earlier President Jimmy Carter had relaxed the total ban on recruiting journalists for intelligence purposes or on using their identities without permission.

The editors protested fervently to the heads of the defense establishment. Abe Rosenthal, then chief editor of THE NEW YORK TIMES, warned that the damaging action turns every American correspondent into a potential spy. Turner claims that several governments continue to suspect American journalists whether the agency uses their services or not.

And what about American businessmen, academics, clerics, and missionaries abroad? Is their status basically different from that of the media? The intelligence community claims that if all these are removed from the list of professionals authorized to deal in intelligence activity and in supplying a cover for spies, the CIA would not have anyone to recruit or a disguise to use (except for members of the diplomatic corps, who are "burned" from the outset).

Meanwhile, the director of the American Peace Corps came to the CIA with a fervent demand "to erect a wall" between the Peace Corps and the intelligence corps. He pulled out an agreement from 1978 eliminating any misinterpretation regarding the activities of the two corps.

The recycling of the affair in THE WASHINGTON POST reopened the dispute between journalists and spies. CNN President Tom Johnson called for an urgent meeting with CIA Director John Deutch. He wanted from him an undertaking that there would be a total separation between the security services and the media. Johnson said that his correspondents around the world have already reported hearing suspicions about their alleged direct and indirect links with the CIA.

In a meeting with WASHINGTON POST editors and the AP news agency, Deutch was careful not to make any promises that the agency would avoid using journalists or the disguise of journalists, especially when it could save the lives of Americans.

In testimony to the Senate, Deutch declared that any disguise is kosher for him if it foils terrorist attacks and uncovers consignments of weapons of mass destruction. The weakness for public relations is shared even by leaders of states that support terrorism and are suspected of disseminating weapons of mass destruction — Saddam Husayn and Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi and even the Iranian mullahs — who open to the world media, including the Americans, channels that any intelligence service would welcome.

Journalists' reports from these isolated countries, which in intelligence jargon are called "open sources," sometimes serve as the sole source for assessments presented to policymakers.

The intelligence services will have to decide whether it is preferable to stick to a total separation between journalism and spying and thus to receive a continuous flow of open information, or to put the correspondents under suspicion and disrupt their information gathering in order to ensure the option of converting them into short-time spies.

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Jordan: Crown Prince Hasan Pledges No 'Staging Point' for Attacks

TA0803104596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordan's Crown Prince Hasan said that his country will not permit any element to use his country as a staging point for terrorist attacks against Israel. Jordan is fully committed to the struggle against terrorism. Crown Prince Hasan made these statements in letters he sent to Israeli personages, in which he also expressed his condolences to the families who lost their relatives in the recent terrorist attacks. Our Arab affairs correspondent Arye Gus reports that President 'Ezer Weizman, Minister Yosi Sarid, author 'Amos 'Oz, and Judge Elyaqim Rubinstein were among those who received the letters. Crown Prince Hasan sent the letters via Shim'on Shamir, Israel's ambassador to Jordan.

Jordan: Crown Prince Calls For Regional Terrorism Summit

JN0903082496 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 9 Mar 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan called Friday [8 March] in a letter to the TIMES newspaper for a conference of Israel and its neighbours to stamp out terrorism, and promised to help Israel fight extremism.

"There must be a co-operative effort to resolve (the problem of terrorism) among the countries of our region who seek peace," he wrote.

Crown Prince Hasan said that "in a telephone conversation with President Husni Mubarak of Egypt last Monday, and on Radio Israel, I have called for a 'regional conference against terrorist organisations'."

He added that he wanted to make clear that the four suicide bombings in Israel since Feb. 25 that have killed 60 people were "alien and abhorrent to Islam as we understand it."

"Jordan has always stood against extremism," he added.

Jordan: Crown Prince Notes Need for Clear Strategy on Terrorism

JN1003113796 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 10 Mar 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman (J.T.) — The anti-terrorism summit planned for Wednesday [13 March] in Egypt is a very important event in the Middle East region and Jordan will participate in the meeting with an open mind, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the Regent, said Saturday.

Addressing a meeting at the Public Security Department (PSD) attended by acting Prime Minister Abdallah al-Nusur and other officials, the Regent said: "In attending the coming meeting Jordan has to have clear and practical ideas on dealing with terrorism and a well-planned working paper reflecting Jordan's views and its determination to confront all forms of terrorism."

"Acts of terrorism are crimes against humanity which aim at damaging our international reputation," said Prince Hasan: "Acts of terrorism conflict with our religious beliefs."

"In the past decade Jordan has been demanding regional cooperation for collective security and arrangements against drug trafficking and money-laundering."

"Mosque preachers have a duty to explain Islam's stand vis-a-vis crime and terrorism and to defend the Islamic faith in the face of the onslaught on our religion which is now spreading worldwide as a result of certain practices and acts that have been happening here and there and were unjustly attributed to Islam," added the Regent.

"Indeed, our culture and faith do not condone acts of suicide nor the killing of innocent people, were they Arabs or Israelis," said the Regent.

"The present stage requires from us not only to prepare politically for the post-peace era but rather also to move parallel in preparing for security and ways to combat crime and the criminals who target the innocent especially those who commit terrorist crimes," he added.

He said the PSD had a duty to train customs officers at various border posts on ways to combat smuggling and drug trafficking.

The government intends to open model border posts that can truly reflect Jordan's civilised image and the efficiency of its workers, he said.

Road accidents, the Crown Prince said, were not the sole responsibility of the PSD but "a national responsibility involving the efforts of all concerned institutions."

"We should enlist the help of legislation adopted by more modern nations and adopt rules that cater to the needs of the ever-growing and expanding transport sector," he added.

The regent expressed hope that the PSD would soon be able to establish a specialised agency entrusted with the task of combatting crimes and warned that the number of drug users and drug addicts — which has now reached 7,000 — was on the increase.

He called for efforts on the part of all concerned social institutions to fend off the danger of drugs.

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The Regent conveyed to the PSD officers greetings from His Majesty King Husayn reassuring them that he enjoys excellent health and recent tests were reassuring.

Attending the meeting were the ministers of interior and youth.

Jordan: Information Minister Supports Antiterrorism Summit

NC0903083096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0730 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Mar (MENA)—Jordanian Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir stated that his country agrees with the stand of President Husni Mubarak, who was the first to call for a summit to confront terrorism, and also with U.S. President Bill Clinton's stand on the importance for the maximum number of regional countries to participate in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit.

In statements to AL-AHRAM published today, the Jordanian minister underlines the importance of this summit in sending a unified and clear message that stresses that everyone must work to combat terrorism, backs the peace process, and affirms that the peoples of the region should not be kept from living in peace and prosperity because of a few who want to kill this process.

The summit was discussed by President Clinton and King Husayn in Washington and during intensive contacts that President Clinton held with President Mubarak. The aim was to ensure that the Arab and Gulf countries participate in the summit.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said that the explosions inside Israel could prompt the return of the Israeli Army to the West Bank and possibly result in the death of the independent Palestinian state. This is why Jordan believes that these acts are not directed against Israel alone, but against the entire region and the peace process. The summit aims to come out with definite and practical objectives and steps to fight terrorism.

Regarding the tripartite meeting expected to be held by President Mubarak, King Husayn, and President Yasir 'Arafat, the Jordanian information minister said the objective of this meeting is to coordinate support for the Palestinian National Authority at the final-stage negotiations with Israel. President Mubarak discussed this at his recent meeting with King Husayn. Following recent events, there is time enough before the final negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and Israel start.

Jordan: Leaders To Meet on Sidelines of Antiterrorism Summit

JN0903081796 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 9 Mar 96 pp 1, 19

[Report by Ahmad Shakir in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-DUSTUR has learned that His Majesty King Husayn will participate in a five-way summit in Sharm al-Shaykh, Egypt, on 14 March, on the sidelines of the international antiterrorism summit that will be attended by the presidents of 30 countries.

The five-way summit will be attended by U.S. President Bill Clinton, Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak, Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. This summit will focus on the future of the regional peace process and cooperation among these five countries to achieve security and prosperity.

A Jordanian-Egyptian-Palestinian summit will be held on the same day. It is aimed at supporting the Palestinian stand in the final negotiations with Israel on refugee affairs, borders, water, and Jerusalem. The summit will also discuss developments in Israel in light of the recent bombings in Israeli cities.

Jordan: Authorities Reportedly Ignored Iraqi Vice President's Arrival

JN0803170496 Dubayy AL-BAYAN in Arabic 5 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Khalil Khurmah and news agency dispatches]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman—[passage omitted] Jordanian sources have told AL-BAYAN that the Jordanian authorities ignored Iraqi Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan when he arrived in Amman en route to three Arab Maghreb states.

These sources said that Ramadan and the accompanying delegation were not accorded an official reception as was the case previously. They added that Jordan recalled its Ambassador to Baghdad Bassam Qaqish for consultations on the recent developments in bilateral relations. The sources did not rule out the possibility that the ambassador may not return to Baghdad.

In another development, Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i, an Iraqi opposition member residing in Syria, said that regional differences are preventing the toppling of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn. In a statement to AFP yesterday, al-Samarra'i said that the situation in Iraq is complicated.

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Jordan: 'Sources' Deny Expulsion of Iraqi Ambassador Discussed

JN0903093496 Amman AL-URDUN in Arabic 11 Mar 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed official Jordanian sources denied that Jordan has discussed the issue of expelling the Iraqi ambassador. The sources added that, on the contrary, Jordan is concerned about maintaining the special relationship between the two countries.

Jordan: Iraqis Reportedly Considering Cutting Off Trade Relations

JN0903101896 Amman AL-URDUN in Arabic 11 Mar 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] In a sudden move, some Iraqi businessmen and merchants in Jordan are clearing their desks in Amman and getting ready to return to Baghdad. Political observers believe that this step is a result of the escalation in official Jordanian statements against the [Iraqi] president and members of his family.

Iraqi sources said that some Iraqi officials have presented a preliminary recommendation to halt all forms of trade with Jordan as a prelude to a partial closure of the border between the countries. This would come at a time when Iraq's borders with Syria and Turkey are completely open, and Turkish and Syrian products are flooding the Iraqi market.

Jordan: Local Import Firm Reportedly Has Close Ties to Saddam

JN0903114496 Amman AL-MASHRIQ in Arabic 9 Mar 96 p 1

["Exclusive" report: "Sattam al-Qa'ud Is a Personal Friend of Saddam Husayn"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jordanian Government's official spokesman disclosed the seizure of a banned shipment being imported from Poland to Iraq via Queen Alia International Airport. The spokesman added that the shipment was imported by the al-Iman Company and listed as agricultural equipment. The official spokesman expressed resentment and regret over the attempt to exploit Jordan.

Official Jordanian sources said that the al-Iman Company for Trade Investments is officially registered in Jordan and, until recently, was owned by Jordanians, including Dr. Mashhur Khalafat.

The business is now owned by Iraqis, including Sattam al-Qa'ud. It trades in food and equipment, not only for Iraq, but also between Jordan and other Arab countries.

Sources close to Iraqi businessman Sattam al-Qa'ud said that al-Qa'ud does not hide his allegiance to the Iraqi regime and to President Saddam personally. The sources added that al-Qa'ud has run continuous trade between Baghdad and a number of capitals through the Jordanian capital on behalf of Iraqi regime enterprises, as well as the Iraqi private sector. Jordanian economic sources ruled out the idea that al-Qa'ud would risk his many interests in Jordan, estimated at millions of dinars, for the sake of a small deal.

The Polish Government's official spokesman in Warsaw denied that his country allowed a banned shipment to Iraq. Polish diplomatic sources in Amman said that Poland is supports the implementation of the Security Council resolutions that boycott Iraq. The Polish Embassy in Baghdad looks after U.S. interests there. Speaking to AL-MASHRIQ, the same sources said that the Polish Government and its people oppose all forms of violence and terrorism in the region.

Jordanian political sources neither confirmed nor denied whether the seizure of the shipment, which would have been used for military purposes, will affect the ongoing oil-for-food talks in New York aimed at easing the sanctions imposed on Iraq or if it will be viewed as a transient violation of the Security Council resolutions.

Other sources noted that the timing of announcement of the confiscation of this shipment, three weeks after it took place, is linked to the Jordanian Government efforts to prove it is innocent of supporting Saddam Husayn's regime and to get closer to the Gulf regimes.

Jordan: Israel Reportedly Asks for Suspension of Transport Accord

JN1103120596 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 11 Mar 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD has learned that the Israeli Government has urgently asked the Jordanian Government in a secret memorandum to suspend the implementation of the transport agreement that was signed early this month allowing the passage of vehicles and persons between Israel and Jordan as of 16 March.

The Israeli Government said this request stems from the present security circumstances which cannot tolerate any new terrorist actions that might result from allowing the passage of vehicles between the two countries.

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Jordan: King Husayn, Perry Review Defense Cooperation, Terrorism

JN0903134796 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1200 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] His majesty the king, now visiting the U.S., has had a closed-door meeting with Defense Secretary William Perry. They later held a plenary session attended by senior Jordanian and American officials. Talks dealt with bilateral ties, particularly defense cooperation.

The Pentagon chief asserted his country's commitment to meet Jordan's defense needs through supplying it with advanced armaments and cooperating in the areas of training and holding joint exercises.

The discussions also touched upon the latest peace developments and the recent terrorist acts in Jerusalem and Ashqelon and Tel Aviv. The two sides agreed that the attacks targeted the peace process and sought to place obstacles in its way. They underscored their determination to jointly cooperate with other concerned parties in the region to curb terrorism and give more momentum to the peace process.

The talks were attended by Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, Chief of the Royal Court 'Awni al-Khasawinah, Their Royal Highnesses Prince 'Abdallah and Prince 'Ali, the king's sons, as well as His Majesty's Military Secretary His Royal Highness Prince Talal and other senior officials. The American team included the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a number of senior military officials, as well as the U.S. ambassador to Jordan.

Jordan: King Husayn on Exercises With U.S., Anti-Terrorism Summit

JN0903201596 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 9 Mar 96

[News conference by King Husayn of Jordan to unidentified correspondents after meeting U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry at the Pentagon in Washington on 8 March—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] Your Majesty the King: Can you explain the objective of the maneuvers that will be carried out by U.S. aircraft in the region, including Jordan?

[Husayn] Joint maneuvers are a familiar thing. We previously carried out such maneuvers with friendly states and forces. In this case, this will also be the framework of these joint maneuvers in order to improve preparedness, get acquainted with the weak spots wherever they are, get acquainted with each other, and cooperate with each other because we belong to one group in this world in terms of our wishes and objectives regarding the present and future.

[Correspondent] What is the latest news about supplying Jordan with modern weapons? Will this issue be decided during this visit?

[Husayn] I believe that this issue has been decided. We are now in the phase of details. Therefore, these joint maneuvers will pave the way for us to receive modern equipment, God willing, for the Royal Jordanian Air Force and the Armed Forces.

[Correspondent, in English] What measures would you like to see come out of the summit [words indistinct]?

[Husayn, in English] I would certainly hope that it will be able to address a problem that we face in the region we see threatening the peace process and all the accomplishments and achievements so far, bringing a threat to the region in terms of the possibility of further actions and reactions and escalation and generally an attempt that is ongoing to try to make people to lose hope and to lose optimism and to lose conviction in the fact that peace makes a difference in our region.

So, I hope that the results will be concrete and will manifest also the desire of the majority of nations to stand up against terrorism wherever and whenever in a meaningful way.

Jordan: Regent on U.S. Flights Over Iraq, Military Exercises

JN1003114196 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 10 Mar 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by Caroline Faraj]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Jordan's decision to allow the stationing of American planes in the Kingdom to fly surveillance flights over southern Iraq emanated from its role in carrying out United Nations resolutions, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the Regent, said Saturday [9 March].

The Regent also noted that upcoming joint Jordanian-American military exercises would offer Jordanian pilots the chance to train on new aircraft until the Kingdom receives F-16 fighter jets promised by the U.S.

The Regent pointed out that joint exercises with the U.S. were not anything new and that such exercises were going on for years and that the exercises should be seen separate from the U.S. surveillance flights over southern Iraq.

Referring to the U.S. military presence in the Gulf and the Balkans and Jordan's involvement in the flights over southern Iraq, the Regent said that U.S. aircraft carriers

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had been carrying out an international military mission in the Gulf and another in the Balkans, adding that the U.S. planes were simply applying U.N. resolutions.

He said Jordan's role in this matter emanates from its central geographical location between the Gulf on one side and the Balkans on the other.

Prince Hasan said that one has to differentiate between the U.S. military duties within the international force which conducts flights over southern Iraq and the joint U.S.-Jordanian military exercises, which primarily aim at providing training to the Kingdom's airforce pilots on flying F-16 planes.

Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir, who is accompanying His Majesty King Husayn on a visit to the United States, told the press Friday that 34 American planes "will carry out surveillance operations over southern Iraq."

It will be the first time since the United States, Britain and France set up an exclusion zone to Iraqi aircraft south of the 32d Parallel in August 1992 that Jordan will be used as a base for operations.

Until now the allies have used air bases in the Gulf and U.S. aircraft carriers as a launching pad for the surveillance operations aimed at protecting the Shi'ite Muslim population in southern Iraq from raids by government forces.

The Pentagon announced Thursday that 12 F-15 planes, 18 F-16s and four KC-135 refuelling aircraft would be deployed in Jordan in April or June to help support the peace process and regional security.

The U.S. planes will also take part in joint maneoeuvers with the Jordanian air force, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said.

He said Jordanian pilots would be trained to fly F-16s in preparation for the planned transfer of 16 of the planes from the U.S. to Jordan.

Prime Minister 'Abd al-Karim al-Kabariti said Friday that Jordan will not permit the Kingdom to be used for attacks against any Arab country.

Pentagon officials said the deployment to Jordan has been in the works for months as part of an effort to heighten the ability of the U.S. military to act quickly in case of trouble in the Middle East, the LOS ANGELES TIMES reported.

After Iraqi troops massed near Kuwait in the fall of 1994, the Pentagon began negotiating to position more military supplies in key Middle East countries. It also sought to gain access to more airfields, the times said.

The new aircraft will be in Jordan between the departure of the aircraft carrier Nimitz from the Gulf and the arrival of its replacement, the carrier Carl Vinson. the United States sent a force to Bahrain last fall in a similar situation.

Analysts quoted by the TIMES said the deployment, which will mark the first time the United States has stationed warplanes in Jordan, reflects a growing closeness between the two countries.

Jordan: PM Says Maneuvers With U.S. Not Linked to Area Situation

JN0803204796 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al- Kabariti said that the participation of 34 U.S. fighter planes in the joint military exercises that Jordan periodically holds with the forces of friendly and sisterly countries aims to help the Jordanian Armed Forces make use of the expertise of the U.S. forces. He noted that these exercises also seek to improve and develop our defense capabilities which are a top priority for the kingdom.

In a press statement in Washington today, the prime minister added that the United States accepted a Jordanian request to host a joint military exercises program with the aim of giving field training to Royal Jordanian Air Force pilots on flying F-16 fighter planes. He added that Jordan will receive 16 F-16's shortly.

Al-Kabariti noted that the two-month joint military exercises program, which will begin as of mid-April, was conducted in a number of sisterly countries whose armed forces include fighter planes of the same kind.

The U.S. defense secretary announced during his latest visit to the kingdom that Washington agreed to provide Jordan with 16 F-16 modern fighter planes to upgrade its defensive capabilities.

The prime minister said that Jordan categorically rejects any statements or insinuations to the effect that there is any link whatsoever between these periodical military

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exercises and any regional developments, whether those in Iraq or the escalation of violence in Israel and the territories of the Palestinian National Authority.

Al-Kabariti asserted: Jordan will never allow under any circumstances any form of using its land as a staging area for any hostile military action against any sisterly Arab country — a position to which Jordan was committed in the past and will continue to be so in the future. He added: The kingdom's position is well known vis-a-vis any Arab country's use of force against any sisterly Arab country.

Jordan: U.S. Planes Reportedly To Overfly Southern No-Fly Zone

JN0903132296 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1220 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We have just received word that the U.S. fighter planes that will be deployed in Jordan soon will overfly the no-fly zone in southern Iraq. This was announced by a Jordanian official and transmitted by the JORDANIAN NEWS AGENCY.

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Lebanon: Buwayz Comments on Sharm al-Shaykh Summit

NC1003183696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 10 Mar 96

[News Conference by Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz in Beirut on 10 March—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday the president [Ilyas al-Hirawi] was informed of an invitation from President Bill Clinton to attend the Sharm al-Shaykh Conference. I believe the Egyptian Embassy will also convey a similar invitation to the president today. The invitation is still under study. I believe the president will inform President Clinton of his final decision tomorrow.

Lebanon takes into consideration several factors. First of all, this conference is being held to discuss terrorism while the main problem in the Middle East is a political one that has not been solved yet. This conference comes on the heels and in reaction to the violence that occurred in Israel recently. Violence is not confined to Israel but is also directed against Arab countries, above all Lebanon. Some countries are in a hurry to convene this conference to discuss terrorism and violence. These same countries and the UN Security Council hesitated to meet when Israel exercised terrorism against Lebanon and its southern part.

We regret violence as a whole in the region. But we take into consideration that we and others should not tackle this topic from only one angle and one side. We do not support violence. We are against violence. We support a final solution to violence that must be accompanied by a comprehensive, just, and permanent solution. Therefore, tackling one aspect of all these problems does not serve the desired objective. Tackling violence that is an outcome of a political problem or an expression of political suffering should not take place in isolation from the political problem itself.

Lebanon believes in a halt to violence in all the Middle East. It calls for a conference that will deal with the real problem still embodied in Israel's occupation of Arab lands and its disregard for Arab rights. All parties must benefit from this momentum and these circumstances to accelerate peace—a peace that started in Madrid and which must be just, comprehensive, and real.

Lebanon: Further on Buwayz Remarks on Summit, Terror

NC1103090496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz stressed that Lebanon supports the peace process but he expressed his fear that the conference might only discuss terrorism without discussing the peoples' right to resist occupation. He said: We fear this conference might be based on the prevailing mood, reaction, or current psychological mobilization and ignore that the violence does not stem form one direction in this region, but from various directions. He added: I have stated that I am particularly in favor of a quiet, clear, and deep conference that will examine the problem thoroughly. This alone will put an end to the violence in the region.

Minister Buwayz urged everyone to pause and examine the deep political problems and to reactivate the peace process with new energy without prevaricating or stalling. He said: The peace process launched in Madrid over four years ago stemmed from clear and frank principles on which agreement was reached through exchanged letters and mutual talks. These principles called for land for peace and for the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and Resolution 425 on Lebanon, which was acknowledged through written messages.

Buwayz added: No one can liken or compare the resistance of people to occupiers on their own land with terrorist operations carried out by organizations outside right, the law, and legitimate human rights. He added: We in Lebanon have land occupied and citizens detained in Israeli jails that are not subject to international justice or supervision. We in Lebanon are exposed to daily acts of terror in the south against individuals and property. We can assess better than any other country ways of tackling these issues. We appreciate the efforts of all the countries that are interested in solving the Middle East problem and emphasize the importance of their trying to solve the political problem that lies in Israel's occupation of Arab territory and its Arab people. On this basis a radical solution to the problem of security can then be found. Buwayz noted continuing coordination with Syria and stressed that Lebanon refuses to receive any Palestinian whom Israel may try to deport.

Lebanon: Minister Says Antiterror Summit 'Attempt To Escape Facts'

NC1003150696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1400 GMT 10 Mar 96

[Report by Husayn Darwish, NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondent in Ba'labakk]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] State Minister Dr. Fayiz Shukr has said that the Sharm-al-Shaykh summit is only an attempt to escape facts. He said the heads of state who are gathering for this summit, if they are serious in establishing a just and comprehensive peace, should return to the Madrid conference and pressure Israel

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into accepting international resolutions and withdrawing from the occupied territories. State Minister Shukr was speaking during a tour of villages in eastern Ba'labakk. He said the excuses they are giving, and hints against others, are only aimed at intimidation. Terrorism and intimidation, he said, are demonstrated in the organized Israeli acts against our people and kinsfolk in Palestine and southern Lebanon. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Says Participation in Summit 'Not Yet Decided'

NC1003120896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri has stated that Lebanon has not yet decided whether to participate in the antiterrorism international summit, slated to be held in Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday [13 March].

In a statement to the MIDDLE EAST NEWS AGENCY [MENA] correspondent in Beirut, the prime minister said that this issue is still under discussion and that in-depth consultations are being conducted concerning this summit. He added that no decision has been made yet.

Lebanon Not To Attend Antiterrorism Summit

NC0903212196 Paris AFP in English 2057 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, March 9 (AFP)—Lebanon said on Saturday [9 March] that it would not attend the international anti-terrorism summit being held in Egypt next week, according to a government official.

Lebanon: Dallul, Qabalan Attack Antiterror Summit, U.S. Report

NC0903124796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] National Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul has said that the Taba conference due to be held next week is doomed to failure because it aims to appease Israel. He added that such a conference cannot defeat the martyrdom and sacrifice in the nations whose rights have been stolen. He noted that the Arab-Israeli negotiations have broken down and that other tracks will largely falter. [passage omitted]

Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir Qabalan, deputy chairman of the Higher Islamic Shiite Council, has said that the Taba meeting due to be held on Wednesday [13 March] aims to fool world public opinion and justify any hostile Israeli action against Lebanon, Syria, and Iran. He called for caution and opposition to the conspiracy. Shaykh Qabalan denounced the U.S. document [human rights report], which contains distorted information and aims to incite world public opinion against Lebanon.

Lebanon: Hizballah Statement Attacks 'Terrorist' Summit in Egypt

NC0903095096 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The international summit that will be held in Egypt under the guise of combating terrorism, as the U.S. White House claims, will be a major development that attracts much political attention. The summit is a new step in the war between the proponents and opponents of the U.S. plan for a settlement. According to informed political sources, the next few days will see further tension, with attempts to curb the activity of those who resist the imposed plan through heroic operations to hinder the settlement process. The summit, for which the U.S. Administration is summoning 20 heads of states, has been condemned.

In a statement, Hizballah says the U.S.-Israeli announcement of a possible Middle Eastern-international summit to combat terrorism in the wake of the heroic martyrdom-seeking operations by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Islamic Jihad in retaliation for the assassination of martyrs Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi and Yahya 'Ayyash shows that those calling for the summit, responding to it, or welcoming it have forgotten that the operations were in response to the Zionist entity's terrorism, usurpation of the land, oppression of man, and assassinations of mujahidin inside and outside Palestine.

The statement stresses that the martyrdom-seeking operations and resistance operations in occupied Palestine, and in south Lebanon and the western al-Biqa' too, target an enemy who is occupying our territory and homeland and a usurping Army whose occupation and aggression offend the rights of our peoples and mankind. Resisting occupation is a right recognized by all laws, religions, and international and human conventions and norms. No one can view this as terrorism in any other way.

The statement says the real terrorism is that being practiced by the United States—as shown by its huge budgets to topple stable countries; its threats that constitute interference in those countries' internal affairs; its listing of countries like Iran, Syria, Cuba, and Sudan on what it calls terrorism lists; and by its imposition of international economic sanctions against them and others—sanctions harming peoples, killing children, and dispossessing the poor and the needy. The real terrorism is being practiced by Israel through daily attacks on peaceful villages and civilians in southern Lebanon and

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the western al-Biqa', using U.S.- made aircraft and unlimited U.S. support, and its chasing and assassination of the mujahidin, wherever they are, even in Malta.

The statement stresses that this is the real terrorism, and that the United States and Israel, being the major sponsors and historical godfathers of international terrorism, are the last ones who can talk about terrorism.

The statement adds: The summit that is being promoted as fighting terrorism only seeks to save the settlement plan, into which some treasonous leaders in the region have been dragged. Those leaders surrendered to the settlement's humiliating conditions thus put a stick in the hands of the Zionists and Americans to beat their own oppressed peoples with. The summit also is aimed at hiding the clear fact that the peoples of the region reject this enemy, any negotiations with it, any subjugation to it, and every settlement that fails to regain the usurped land.

The statement says that this terrorist summit, if it is held, will be a violation of human rights, a flagrant aggression against the peoples of the region, an exercise in insolent U.S. hegemony over our region, and will perpetuate Israeli control of the region. It says the Arab nation will not accept nor remain silent regarding anyone trying to harm its aspirations and dignity, especially since the terrorism summit is aimed at attacking the very countries that make their own decisions and refuse to surrender to the U.S. policy in the region and at eliminating the mujahidin who are safeguarding the nation's might, dignity, freedom, and independence.

The statement concludes: The policy of martyrdom-seeking resistance that our people have initiated against the Israeli occupation and U.S. hegemony will not retreat. The Islamic and national movements in the region will continue to deepen this resistance and to plan for a comprehensive confrontation against all the capitulation schemes of world arrogance, foremost of which is the plan to hold a Middle East terrorist summit. The struggle will continue until a solid resolution is achieved, God willing.

Lebanon: Contacts 'Stepped Up' With Syria on Antiterrorism Summit

NC0903074796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The pace of regional development pace is quickening with the announcement of an international summit, which the United States and Egypt decided to convene in Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday [13 March]. [passage omitted]

Contacts have been stepped up with Syria to formulate a unified stance on the international summit. Lebanon will decide today whether or not it will participate in that summit. U.S. President Bill Clinton and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak will chair the summit. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Prime Minister Leaves for Damascus

NC1103091696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0900 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri left Beirut for Damascus at 1000 today. He will meet Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and senior Syrian officials for talks on the latest local and regional developments.

Lebanon: Hizballah Says Summit Serves 'U.S. Hegemony'

NC0803202496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2005 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah has stated that the international summit in Sharm al-Shaykh is a violation of human rights and an infringement on the region's nations.

In a statement released tonight Hizballah added that the summit constitutes U.S. hegemony over the Middle East. Hizballah stressed that the suicide operations in confronting the Israeli occupation and U.S. hegemony will not stop.

Lebanon: PLO's Qaddumi Meets Buwayz, Denounces PA's Measures

NC0803133096 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, denied that he discussed with Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz the transfer of 500 Palestinian fighters from 'Ayn al-Hulwah Camp to Gaza or the case of Abu-Mihjan [Palestinian suspect in the murder of Islamic Scholar Shaykh Nizar al-Halabi]. Qaddumi stressed that he refuses to interfere in Lebanon's domestic affairs. Qaddumi reiterated his absolute rejection of resettling Palestinians in Lebanon.

Asked about his views on the Taba antiterror conference, Qaddumi said: I am not against any conference, but I may not accept its results. He deplored the repressive measures carried out by the Palestinian Authority [PA] and added that he would send a message to the brothers in the territories on this issue so that such measures may not lead to inter-Palestinian strife.

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Qaddumi said that his tour of Arab countries seeks to consolidate common Arab action, get acquainted with the Arab atmosphere, and underline the peaceful track.

Lebanon: Overnight Israeli Attacks, Raids on Homes Reported

NC0903065096 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Coinciding with the Israeli-U.S. mobilization of worldwide support for Israel, Israeli acts of aggression against the liberated areas are continuing. At the same time, Israeli terrorist acts against citizens inside the occupied border strip have escalated.

NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondents in the south reported Israeli overnight attacks on several villages in the western and eastern sectors, the western al-Biqa', and Iqlim al-Tuffah.

Resistance men retaliated for these acts of aggressions by attacking enemy positions and patrols. The Amal Movement announced that its groups attacked the 'Alman and al-Qusayr posts and a Lahdist [South Lebanese Army] patrol on the Dayr Siryan Road. A statement by the movement says the enemy suffered casualties and losses of vehicles.

Arrivals from the occupied strip say a group from the Lahdist gang and enemy intelligence stormed and searched homes of some residents in Ibil al-Saqy. They took some of the household items to Marj 'Uyun Barracks and burned other items. The residents of Ibil al-Saqy asked a Norwegian contingent operating with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon to protect them. Meanwhile, residents of al-Tiri issued a statement saying that the Zionist enemy is surrounding the town and raiding homes. They said the Zionist enemy blew up five homes. They appealed to international and humanitarian organizations to stop the Israeli enemy's terrorism.

Lebanon: Artillery Fire in South; Israeli Soldier Wounded in Attack

NC0903091596 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The [Israeli] occupation forces have resumed their attacks on peaceful southern villages. Their artillery emplacements in Jabal Humayyd and al-Qantarah bombarded valleys near the villages of Tibnit, Qabrikha, and Majdal Silm in the central sector. At the same time, the villages of Zibqin, Yatar, and Majdal Zun in the western sector came under intermittent artillery shelling from the occupation posts in Shaqif al-Nami and the Tayr Harfa triangle. Also the outskirts of Frun, Wadi al-Hujayr, and the Litani River basin came under 120-mm and 155-mm artillery fire originating from the occupation artillery emplacements in 'Alman and Qal'at al-Shaqif.

[Reporting on the situation in the south, Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic at 0800 GMT on 9 March 96 says: "The Israeli Army post of al-Dabshah came under machine-gun fire this morning. Simultaneously, the al-Nabi Tahir position was subjected to artillery shelling. An Israeli soldier suffered superficial wounds as a result. The personnel manning the two posts returned fire, supported by the South Lebanese Army and Israeli Army artillery."]

Lebanon: Army Deploys To Keep Israel From Deporting Palestinians

NC1003061996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY has learned that the Lebanese Army will deploy a mechanized unit one km from the Zummarayya crossing point in Hasbayya. This step, which is expected to take place within the next two days, is aimed at obstructing Israel's plans to deport more Palestinians [to Lebanon], as it did in Marj al-Zuhur in 1992.

Lebanon: Amal Claims Attacks on Israeli-SLA Positions

NC1003064896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] To mark solidarity with the south and in honor of the martyrs who fell during the Ma'rakah massacre, Amal Movement groups carried out a series of attacks on Israeli and agent [South Lebanese Army, SLA] positions in Qal'at al-Shaqif, al-Dabshah, and the Kafr Tibnit crossing at 0630 today. Fierce clashes ensued involving the use of machine guns and rockets between the resistance men and the personnel manning the positions.

Elsewhere, another resistance group attacked an Israeli mechanized patrol on the al-Dabshah-'Ali al-Tahir road with machine guns and rockets.

As of 0650 today, the Israeli forces in al-Zaffatah, al-Tayyibah, and Qal'at al-Shaqif have been bombarding al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, Kafr Tibnit, Mazra'at al-Hamra', Arnun, Yuhmur, the eastern quarter of Kafr Rumman, the outskirts of Habbush, al-Wadi al-Akhdar, and the southern quarter of 'Arab Salim. The Israeli bombardment was still in progress when this newscast was prepared.

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Lebanon: Hizballah Official—Summit Serves Clinton Election Campaign

NC1003083796 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Al-Hajj Husayn Khalil, assistant to the Hizballah secretary general for political affairs, has stated that the main motive for holding the summit in Sharm al-Shaykh on 13 March is to furbish the image of the U.S. Administration and to prepare for Clinton's nomination for another term.

Lebanon: Army Builds Earthen Rampart To Block Israeli Deportations

NC1003115596 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Lebanese Army this morning erected an earthen rampart in the Mimas-Zummarayya-Marj al-Zuhur triangle, 200 meters from the Zummarayya crossing. With this barrier the Army cuts the road between the occupied and liberated areas as a precautionary measure against any possible Israeli plan for deportations to Lebanese territory via the eastern sector, as it has done previously.

Lebanon: Islamic Resistance Ambushes Israeli Patrol, Attacks Posts

NC1003132196 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] There was an escalation in the security situation in the south today, reflected in Israeli shelling and a series of resistance operations. The Islamic Resistance announced that one of its groups ambushed an Israeli convoy at the entrance of the Israeli Western Brigade headquarters in Bayt Jubayl at 1100 today. The resistance members attacked the Israeli convoy using rockets and machine guns, certainly inflicting casualties, the statement says.

A fire support unit also attacked the Haddatha and Rshaf posts with rocket-propelled grenades. The Islamic Resistance statement claims direct hits on both two posts.

The Israeli forces shelled the outskirts of Haddatha, Haris, 'Ayta al-Jabal, and Wadi Sribbin. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: 2 Israeli Soldiers Killed, 5 Hurt in Hizballah Attack

NC1003175596 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] There was marked tension in the south today with a series of resistance operations and Israeli shelling. The result: Two Israeli soldiers were killed and five others were wounded. AFP cited Lahd forces [South Lebanese Army] saying that two Israeli soldiers were killed at noon today and four others were injured when an explosive charge went off as an Israeli military vehicle was passing near the Lebanese-Israeli international border. Hizballah announced responsibility for this operation and said it attacked an Israel patrol along Kafr Kila road at 1315. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: 'Unusual Escalation' Seen in Attack on IDF Force

TA1003193196 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 10 Mar 96

[Menahem Horowitz video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] An IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldier was killed and four other soldiers were wounded in south Lebanon's eastern sector today by the explosion of a roadside bomb planted by Hizballah very close to the border with Israel. The family of the dead soldier has been notified. One of the wounded soldiers is in critical condition, another suffered serious injuries, and the other two are in fair condition. In another incident that occurred this morning, an IDF major was wounded by gunshots. Our correspondent Menahem Horowitz reports from the north:

[Begin recording] [Horowitz] This is the area in which the attack occurred, only 200 meters on the Lebanese side of the border opposite Metulla. The terrorists planted several dozen kilograms of explosives in an olive orchard near the mosque of Kafr Killa. The bomb was detonated when an IDF convoy passed by. One of the soldiers died on the spot; the other soldiers were treated on the spot and were then transferred to the Israeli side of the border where many medical teams waited to treat them. [passage omitted]

The road on which the attack occurred is a main traffic artery along which hundreds of soldiers pass daily. This is what Major General 'Amiram Levin, commander of the IDF Northern Command, had to say about this attack:

[Levin] The terrorists apparently reached the border fence. This attack constitutes an unusual escalation in the situation.

[Horowitz] A closure was imposed on the area and a manhunt after the terrorists is being conducted. For an attack so close to the Israeli border, the terrorists undoubtedly required the cooperation of local villagers. [passage omitted]

The IDF Northern Command is preparing to deal with the escalation in the situation.

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[Levin] We have suffered a series of grave incidents, but we will find the modus operandi and the way to retaliate and strike at Hizballah.

[Horowitz] IDF officers are saying that the Hizballah terrorists are encouraged by recent Hamas successes. It is to be feared that they will attempt to step up the attacks, perhaps with the encouragement of Iran — which is aiding both organizations. [end recording]

Lebanon: Islamic Resistance Fires Missiles at Israeli Helicopters

NC1103094596 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance has added another achievement to its qualitative development through its operations. Islamic Resistance fighters detonated an explosive charge near a Zionist patrol on the Lebanese border with occupied Palestine, on the road between Tall al-Nahas and the Fatimah crossing point in Kafr Killa. Two Zionist soldiers were killed and four wounded according to foreign news agencies. The enemy admitted one soldier was killed and four were hurt, one seriously.

The Islamic Resistance said the operation was in revenge for the victims of U.S.-Zionist terrorism on 8 March 1985 in an explosion that rocked Bi'r al-'Abd in Beirut.

At 0630 today Islamic Resistance strugglers fired SAM-7 missiles at hostile helicopters raking the outskirts of Haddatha and Haris.

According to security sources this morning, the Resistance men attacked a Lahdist [South Lebanese Army] patrol on the Bayt Yahun- Bra'shit road and also attacked the 'Ali al-Tahir post. The fighters scored direct hits.

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Syria Asks U.S., Russia To Reconvene Madrid Peace Conference

JN0903192396 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1842 GMT 9 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Syrian Arab Republic has called on the co-sponsors of the peace process, the United States and the Russian Federation, to reconvene the peace conference which was held in Madrid on 30 October 1991. The call came in a letter Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' sent to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Russian Foreign Minister Yevegeniy Primakov.

The letter was delivered by Faruq al-Shar' when he received Christopher Ross, the U.S. ambassador in Damascus, and Viktor Goguitidze, the ambassador of the Russian Federation in Damascus today.

The following is the text of the letter:

Four years have elapsed since the convocation of the Madrid conference, but the peace process has not realized the cherished aim of achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the region. The peace process has faced many obstacles and serious events causing it to flounder or cease for sometime. You are doubtless aware of the extent of Syria's continuous contribution to overcoming obstacles which were often placed on the path of the peace process.

It is obvious today that because of the accumulated obstacles and serious events, such as the acts of violence and counterviolence, the peace process is now facing a deep crisis which cannot be tackled in a genuine and substantive manner unless there is a return to the frames of reference of the peace process, namely, the peace conference that was held in Madrid on 30 October 1991. As you are aware, the Madrid conference did not conclude its work at that time but suspended its sessions so that each side would be given the opportunity to tackle issues on its respective track.

In this regard, the letter of invitation sent by the cosponsors on 18 October 1991 to the parties concerned to attend the Madrid conference, and the letters exchanged before that date, referred to the possibility that the two sponsors can reconvene the conference with the approval of the concerned parties. Therefore, the circumstances in which the peace process is passing now require more than ever before the reconvening of this conference since it constitutes the only and appropriate framework, which is agreed upon by all the parties involved.

While reaffirming, once again, its commitment to the principles and objectives of the peace process, which started at the Madrid conference, the Syrian Arab Republic urges the peace process sponsors to work on reconvening this conference as soon as possible and agreeing with the parties concerned on the date and venue. Such a measure will provide suitable circumstances that will help remove the existing obstacles and render successful efforts aimed at achieving the just and comprehensive peace, to which the people of the region and the entire world aspire.

Syria: Paper Praises Call To Reconvene Madrid Conference

JN1003075596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 10 Mar 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial, TISHRIN discusses the serious impasse, setbacks, and obstacles suffered by the peace process and stresses the need to address the crises that face this process.

TISHRIN says: Before responding to questions about rescuing the peace process, it must be noted that, during the Madrid conference in late 1991, the parties agreed, through mediation by the cosponsors of the peace process — the United States and the Russian Federation, on the possibility of reconvening the conference if the results of the talks have not arrived at the aspired aim of a just, comprehensive peace. Besides, the conference did not conclude its work; its sessions were suspended. Afterward, bilateral talks on all tracks commenced in Washington.

TISHRIN continues: Syria's call for reconvening the Madrid conference seems appropriate, objective, and sincere. It reflects faithfulness and commitment to the Madrid formula and the foundations on which the conference was convened. The call also clearly shows Syria's sincere eagerness to advance the peace process and tackle the difficulties that face it. The paper says that the accumulation of obstacles to the peace process has caused it to suffer serious setbacks and turbulence.

TISHRIN concludes: Reconvening the Madrid conference will doubtlessly constitute a real rescue for the peace process. It will automatically give the peace process the momentum it needs at this stage and revive hopes for establishing a just, comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

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Syria: Press on Reconvening Madrid Conference, Baraq Comments

JN1103085396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 11 Mar 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-BA'TH comments on the peace process. It notes that all countries asserted that the peace process, which began in Madrid on 30 October 1991, was meant to achieve a clear objective; namely, a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

The paper adds: Everybody knows that the Madrid conference was held on clear foundations to achieve peace. The U.S. Administration then said that had it not been for Syria's position, the conference would not have been convened in the first place. Yesterday, the EU reaffirmed this fact.

AL-BA'TH points out that more than four years have passed since the Madrid conference was convened. However, the peace process, which was supposed to achieve a peace that provides security and stability for everyone, could not achieve this objective for many reasons. The primary reason is that Israel did not comply with the Madrid formula and principles. Israel sought to achieve a peace that suits it alone.

The paper adds: Since the Madrid conference took place, Israel has been placing one obstacle after another in the way of the peace process, despite the fact that there were many opportunities, as the U.S. sponsor acknowledged, to achieve peace. Israel's stands are the reason for not making progress in the peace process, and not moving even a step forward.

AL-BA'TH goes on: The peace process is now in a difficult position, as everyone has observed. Therefore, Syria repeated its stand on the need to reembrace the Madrid formula, meaning the resumption of this conference, which suspended its sessions to address the issues that stand in the way of progress to advance the peace process.

AL-BA'TH concludes: Certainly, it is now clear to everyone, especially to those who are concerned about the peace, security and stability of the region, that there is Arab land that was occupied by aggression and there are people who have rights. These rights must be restored in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy. When this happens, that is, when everybody gets his rights, then peace will certainly prevail in the region.

Under the headline "Occupation Is the Cause of All Tension," TISHRIN says: Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq called on Syria to liquidate Palestinian organizations on its territory. The only thing left for Baraq now is to ask Syria to liquidate hundreds of thousands of Palestinians whom Israel displaced by force and terror after seizing their land and property.

TISHRIN adds: The strange thing is that Israel daily drops tonnes of bombs on innocent citizens in southern Lebanon and practices suppression in the occupied territory without anyone doing anything about it. Not a single day passes without phosphoric and incendiary bombs dropping on Lebanese towns, turning life into destruction.

The paper adds: The question which everybody asks: Why is it that the international community does not view Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon — which has continued since 1982 — and the accompanying barbaric bombardment of innocent people and their property as terrorism that deserves condemnation and punishment? This is especially since Security Council resolutions, particularly Resolution 425, are clear and unambiguous. These resolutions call on Israel to withdraw its forces immediately and unconditionally from southern Lebanon.

TISHRIN goes on: Israel's daily practices in southern Lebanon require a clear condemnation from the international community and actions to end the occupation. Like Syria, Lebanon has called for a just and comprehensive peace in the region based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the UN Charter and principles. After more than four years have passed since the Madrid conference was held, Israeli occupation still exists everywhere, in the Golan, southern Lebanon, and the occupied Arab territories. Nothing has changed at all. Israel has not implemented a single Security Council resolution. It faced the Arab desire for peace by evasion, maneuvering, and procrastination. It also continues to shell innocent residents in southern Lebanon daily.

Syria: Radio Reports Summit To Combat 'Threats' to Peace

JN0903080696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington — U.S. President Bill Clinton stressed that peace is the only option in the Middle East. In a statement carried on the Middle East Broadcasting Center television program Dialogue With the West, President Clinton said: I am pleased to address this message after a tough week. We should do our utmost to achieve peace. He called for moving ahead with the peace process and not providing any opportunities to those who want to undermine it. He said: We should all stand by peace.

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Meanwhile, Aaron Miller, U.S. deputy coordinator of the Middle East peace process, stressed his country's resolve to continue all possible efforts to establish peace in the Middle East. In a televised interview yesterday, Miller said the believes that once calm is restored and the situation created by the recent bombings in Israel has passed, it will be possible to achieve progress in the peace process.

In a separate development, the White House announced yesterday that U.S. President Bill Clinton will visit Cairo and Israel next week to lead a diplomatic mission to rescue the fumbling peace process following the four recent bombings in Israel. White House spokesman Mike McCurry described the summit, which will be held in Sharm al-Shaykh, as a summit for peace in the Middle East.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said that U.S. President Bill Clinton and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak will co-chair a meeting in Egypt to discuss ways to combat threats to the Middle East peace process. Christopher told a State Department meeting on World Women's Day that the summit will be held in the Egyptian town of Sharm al-Shaykh, on the Red Sea. Christopher added that the objective of the summit will be to find ways to alter the course of events in the Middle East.

Syria: Damascus Radio Reports Mubarak's Remarks on Summit

JN0903174796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Cairo, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak said the summit which will be held in Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday was proposed because the peace process is facing very difficult problems.

REUTER cited President Mubarak as telling journalists: We are talking about an international conference to give momentum to the Middle East peace process because it has reached a dead end following the recent explosions in Israel.

He noted that the international conference on, what he calls, terrorism, is another matter, different from that which is being discussed now. The Wednesday conference is more than a forum to combat terrorism, as it aims at rescuing the peace process from collapse.

He stressed that the world leaders participating in the conference should try to arrive at a means to boost the peace process and remove all the obstacles facing it.

He said: We plan to convene such a conference in order to arrive at a solution and issue a statement that will help the peace process.

Asked if he thinks the conference will yield any decisions to combat terrorism, President Mubarak said: I cannot foretell this.

Syria: Paper Cautions Summit To Distinguish Terrorism, Resistance

NC1003122996 Paris AFP in English 1117 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, March 10 (AFP) — Syria said Sunday [10 March] a distinction had to be made between terrorism and the right of a people to fight occupation at the upcoming anti-terrorism summit in Egypt.

"While preparations are underway for the summit in Sharm al-Shaykh on terrorism, the Arab media and newspapers insist on the need to not mix terrorist acts with the legitimate struggle against occupation," the official Syrian newspaper AL-THAWRAH said.

The newspaper warned against "ignoring Israeli terrorism, which is the principal cause of violence."

"Middle East peace is not possible as long as Israel occupies Arab land," the paper added.

Syria has yet to say whether it will attend the summit on Wednesday, which is being held to salvage the peace process after Palestinian militants killed 61 people in four suicide bombings in Israel over the last two weeks.

On Saturday, Syria appeared to reject the anti-terrorism summit, saying that a conference such as the 1991 Madrid peace conference was only way to save the Middle East peace process.

"Syria reaffirms its commitment to achieve the goals and principles of the Madrid conference and calls on the sponsors of the peace process to take up without delay the work of this conference," Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' said.

The message was to sent to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov.

The United States and Russia are the co-sponsors of the 1991 Madrid conference that launched the Middle East peace process. Washington is also behind the anti-terrorism summit.

The Syrian foreign minister asked his U.S. and Russian counterparts to work with concerned parties to reach agreement "on the time and place for an eventual meeting of the conference to overcome the obstacles and to push forward the efforts of peace."

Syria is still on the U.S. State Department list of countries that support terrorism, although it has entered

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into peace talks with Israel which have made little progress.

Syria is demanding that Israel completely withdraw from the Golan Heights, which it seized in the 1967 Middle East war, in exchange for any peace.

The Israeli-Arab peace process "faces a difficult crisis because of obstacles caused by acts of violence, which is impossible to resolve without the convening of another meeting of the Madrid conference," al-Shar' said.

The anti-terrorism summit in Egypt is to be attended by 20 world leaders, including U.S. President Bill Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

The Syrian press on Saturday ran an editorial by the number two in the ruling Ba'th party, 'Abdallah al-Ahmar, who criticized "the unfounded accusation of supporting terrorism."

Syria: Party Official on Terrorism Charge, Peace

JN0803145296 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1023 GMT 8 Mar 96

[Speech by 'Abdallah al-Ahmar, assistant secretary general of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, at a speech rally marking 33d anniversary of the 8 March revolution, at the Umayyad Palace in Damascus — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Comrades, brothers: The March revolution has continued to bolster Syria's pan-Arab role in stopping deterioration, clearing the Arab air, and restoring active Arab solidarity to achieve the pan-Arab interests of the Arab nation under the current circumstances. This is meant to enhance collective action in the face of the challenges of pan-Arab development and liberation and to confront plans and schemes that target the Arabs and seek to control their nation, take advantage of their capabilities, control their resources, and harm their existence as a nation that has a great civilization and outstanding culture.

All the above concepts must promote the major trend toward Arab unity, which must remain the noblest objective. Every Arab citizen and official must regard unity as the guiding light to all his actions and a standard to measure all policies and practices. What is required today is a collective organized Arab action to protect and activate joint Arab institutions and produce a collective Arab awakening to bolster the position of Arabs and their role toward their causes and interests. In addition, this will safeguard Arab countries against subordination and submission to the hegemony of covetous powers. This will also enable our nation to restore its pioneering role and contribution to the development of human civilization and build a just and firm universal peace.

What is also required now is close Arab cooperation in the political, economic, cultural, and scientific fields. Today's world is characterized by collective action and blocs. This world has no mercy on anyone who lags behind or fails to do what is required. Today's world respects those who discover its points of strength and use them to assert their legitimate rights and defend their legitimate interests.

Syria, under the leadership of struggler President Hafiz al-Asad [applause], adheres to these principles. It knows the points of strength and uses them to assert its adherence to Arab rights. This made the world respect Syria and appreciate its opinion, role, and stand. This respect is a great asset which Syria has, in addition to its confidence in its people and the masses of its nation, as well as the wisdom and courage of its leader. These factors strengthen the March revolution and enhance its ability to face current and future challenges.

Brothers and sisters: It is common knowledge that Syria joined the peace process almost five years ago, in accordance with a U.S. initiative based on international legitimacy and the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions. Syria adopted this position because it considered peace an irreversible strategic option. It is a just and comprehensive peace that restores Arab land and rights and removes and ends occupation, injustice, and aggression. It is an honorable peace that preserves dignity and guarantees equitable [al-mutakafi'], equal [al-mutasawi], and mutual [al-mutabadal] security for all sides.

This peace will create prospects for stability, progress, and prosperity for the region. Had Israel responded to the foundations of the peace process and committed itself to providing its requirements, primarily withdrawal from the occupied territory, obstacles would not have emerged in the way of the peace process to an extent that threatens to bring about its collapse. In addition, the region would not have continued to suffer from tension and a cycle of violence. Israel, however, departed from the foundations of the peace process and the principles of the Madrid conference. It resorted to concluding inequitable partial agreements and separate solutions. Thus, it kept its distance from the required just and comprehensive peace and remained throughout this period hesitant, procrastinating and temporizing. Israel has not yet made a decisive and serious decision to achieve a just, comprehensive, honorable, and true peace.

Israel has continued its occupation of Arab territory and denial of Arab rights. This is the source of tension that denies the region security, peace, and stability. Throughout this period, Israel continued to escalate its aggressive practices against Arab citizens in the

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occupied land. These practices reached the extent of collective punishments in all forms. This led to a state of frustration in the entire region.

Syria, on the other hand, made sincere and continuous efforts to allow the peace process to achieve its objective. It provided many opportunities so this process can overcome the obstacles that faced it. Syria also did its best to respond to the efforts of the U.S. sponsor to advance this process on the right path and achieve the desired progress. However, all the efforts have not produced any result because Israel's stand remained rigid, hesitant, and not serious about providing the requirements for the success of the peace process.

While reiterating its commitment to the peace process and to continuing the efforts to make it succeed, Syria repeats its clear and unambiguous stand — which it expressed through the negotiations and to the two sponsors of the peace process and the whole world — that it will not give up any inch of its territory [applause] and will not relinquish Arab rights. Syria will continue to pursue the march of joint action and coordination with fraternal Lebanon to liberate its territory and bolster the unity and stability of its people, without being affected by the attempts that target the march of fraternal coordination and cooperation between the two fraternal countries.

The March Revolution, which adopted its positions on the basis of specific principles that agree with Syria's national interests and that comply with the Arab nation's interests, has not yielded to pressures throughout the past years, regardless of their forms; nor has it succumbed before the challenges, regardless of their size. The revolution is great with its faith in principles and adherence to these principles. It is strong with its people, who are fused in a cohesive domestic front [applause] under the leadership of struggling comrade President Hafiz al-Asad. It is strong with its Arab masses, who rally behind its principled positions. Through these principles, Syria is defending the Arabs' rights, glory, and dignity. These masses see in Syria a leading pan-Arab pioneer to continue the march of Arab struggle to achieve the pan-Arab objectives.

The revolution is also open to interaction with the world states and peoples on the basis of equality, mutual respect, and noninterference in domestic affairs and in a way that does not run counter to its rights and national interests.

We reaffirm today, on the occasion of our celebrations of the 33d anniversary of the glorious March Revolution, that the pressures against Syria and directing false accusations against it, such as sponsoring terrorism and other unfounded accusations that aim at extorting Syria and forcing it to change its position, are useless. Syria's firm position and independent decisionmaking as regards all the issues that relate to its rights and national interests are clear and unambiguous, and provide one of the most important political facts of the age. This is known to everyone who is interested in our region and monitors developments in it. This position became the only constant element in the map of the region; an element that requires everybody to reconsider their positions that do not agree with the requirements of the peace process if they are sincere about their desire to achieve the just and comprehensive peace, and not hegemony, expansion, tutelage, and humiliation.

Events always confirm the justness and correctness of Syria's views. The just and comprehensive peace, which Syria seeks to achieve, is the only way the region can depart from the tense situation and from the whirlpools of violence in which it lives. It is also the only way to achieve security, stability, progress, and prosperity.

Comrades, Brothers, Ladies and Gentlemen: The March Revolution continues its struggle to achieve this just and comprehensive peace, regardless of the efforts it may have to exert, and regardless of the obstacles it may face. This is because peace will benefit the region and all of its people and will strengthen world peace.

The March Revolution also continues the process of construction to open new prospects for the advancement and development of the Syrian Arab society, in terms of economics, politics, science, and culture. The March Revolution continues its endeavors to achieve a better Arab situation and a unified Arab action that can achieve the nation's higher interests, protect its rights, and strengthen the trend to achieve the nation's objectives. It also continues to support the struggle of peoples to achieve their independence and freedom and to build a world free of wars, conflicts, nuclear weapons, and discriminatory actions among nations, be they big or small, rich or poor; a world dominated by the principles of justice and equality, single standards, and respect for each people's right to choose, freely, the course of their development.

The march of the Revolution is continuing. The March Revolution — with its great leader, strugglers, masses, party, and the National Progressive Front — is confident about achieving the clear victory in all its battles.

Greetings to this revolution on its 33d anniversary. [applause]

Greetings to our struggling masses all over the greater Arab homeland. [applause]

Greetings to the 8th general conference of peasants in the Syrian Arab Republic. [applause]

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Greetings to the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, the maker of the revolution and the defender of its banner. [applause]

Greetings to the leader of our march and the symbol of our renaissance, struggling comrade President Hafiz al-Asad.

Peace be upon you. [applause and chants]

Syria: Iraqi Opposition Groups To Meet in Damascus 25 Mar

NC1003153296 Paris AFP in English 1510 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, March 10 (AFP) - Iraqi opposition groups are to hold a meeting in Damascus later this month to discuss ways of toppling President Saddam Husayn, an opposition leader said Sunday.

"The contacts underway have resulted in a decision to hold the meeting gathering all factions within the opposition," including nationalists, Kurds and Islamic fundamentalists, Mish'an al-Juburi told AFP.

Al-Juburi, who leads "The Party of the Nation," said the meeting would take place March 25 in Damascus.

According to a source within the Iraqi opposition, the participants at this meeting will "examine the situation in Iraq and ways to topple the regime" of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn.

The meeting was discussed during talks between al-Juburi and Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam at the end of February in Damascus.

Syria and Iraq, ruled by rival branches of the Ba'th party, broke off diplomatic ties in 1980.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Communique Issued After President's Visit to Iran

LD0903174896 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1620 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear Listeners: The following joint communique was issued at the end of the visit of esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan [ISA], to the Islamic Republic of Iran:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate:

Joint communique issued after the formal visit [words indistinct]

Esteemed Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the ISA, paid a formal visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran from 4 to 6 March at the invitation of his eminence esteemed 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, president of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

1. A high ranking delegation consisting of ministers and senior authorities accompanied the ISA president.

2. During his stay in Iran, esteemed Borhanoddin Rabbani was warmly welcomed, which demonstrates the closeness of fraternal relations between the two friendly countries.

3. The ISA president and his delegation visited the city of Mashhad and offered prayer in the shrine of Imam Reza, peace be upon him [previous words in Arabic]. He also paid respect to the shrine of Imam Khomeyni, the blessing of God be upon him [previous words in Arabic], leader of the Islamic revolution and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

4. In his two rounds of talks with the His Eminence Hashemi- Rafsanjani, esteemed Borhanoddin Rabbani spoke and exchanged views about bilateral regional and international issues [words indistinct].

5. His Eminence Hashemi-Rafsanjani expressed delight at the fruitful results of struggles by the Muslim people of Afghanistan and the installation of the Islamic government in the neighboring and fraternal country. In consideration of the [word indistinct] of the Muslim people of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran declared its readiness to continue its efforts to find a solution for the problems and to assist the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

6. President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the ISA president emphasized the existing religious, historical, and cultural ties between the two countries as a pillar and a solid foundation for even further expansion of bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

7. Both sides exchanged views on the general policy of bilateral relations and have discussed the regional developments and international issues of mutual interest. The talks were conducted in a warm and friendly atmosphere in which understanding and common views were enjoyed [two second interruption in transmission]

8. The president of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the ISA president have emphasized their earnest determination in connection with the struggle against trafficking in narcotic substances. They have agreed to increase cooperation and to take necessary action in this respect.

9. (?Pointing out) the importance and role of regional cooperation, both sides have emphasized [words indistinct] the two countries' endeavor, together with other Economic Cooperation Organization members, to implement the adopted programs.

10. The ISA president expressed his profound gratitude and thanks to the warm and sincere hospitality extended to him during his visit to Iran by the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the government, and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Afghanistan: President Describes Results of Visit to Iran, Central Asia

LD1003202096 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The press office of the presidency has reported that this morning [10 March] a session of the High State Council was held under the chairmanship of the esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

During the session, his excellency the president of the country presented a report on the state delegation's visits to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Tajikistan. He described his visits as excellent and added:

The state delegation was received warmly in the friendly and fraternal countries and was promised all necessary cooperation in connection with ensuring peace in the country and with the alleviation of the urgent needs of the people. All three countries shared the view of the [Afghan] state: that is, if foreign interference ceased, security would immediately be restored in the country. They gave reassurances that they would establish effective and fruitful contacts at the international level regarding the cessation of foreign interference.

The president of the country added: The warm and cordial reception of the delegation by the fraternal and friendly country [break in reception] reflects the international credibility of the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

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Then esteemed Abdorrab Rasul Sayyaf, the leader of Ettehad-e Eslami, reported on the contacts of the state delegation with various sides, and expressed satisfaction with the talks process and the achievement of desired progress in this respect.

Afghanistan: Khales Islamic Party Calls For Talks To Solve Problems

LD0903194096 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Afghanistan issue is an internal matter and this problem cannot be resolved by fighting or by isolating one organization. Therefore, the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party, Khales faction] and the High Coordination Council have been holding direct and indirect talks with the ruling regime in Kabul over the past three-and-a-half years.

The office of the Hezb-e Eslami has issued a statement which says: We want a provisional government to be set up in Afghanistan, [words indistinct] so that the ground is prepared for the installation of an elected government following an election. All organizations should then operate as political parties. All jihadi organizations, including the Taleban group, should gather in a suitable place and take decisions on the formation of a provisional government.

The statement says that the city of Jalalabad is a suitable place for holding such talks. It says that if the government of Kabul does not take part in talks then all the opposition groups will join together and form a united front to exert political and military pressure on Kabul, to make Professor Rabbani consent to transferring power.

The source said that if power is earnestly transferred to Mohammed Khales the fighting in Afghanistan will end.

The source added that if the Taleban group really wishes to resolve the crisis and to set up an Islamic government in Afghanistan, it must choose the path of talks with others and thus jointly find a solution to the country's crisis.

Afghanistan: 3 Killed, 4 Injured in Kabul Rocket Attacks

BK0903124996 Hong Kong AFP in English 1237 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL March 9 (AFP) — Three civilians, including two youngsters, were killed and four wounded in a second deadly rocket attack on the besieged Afghan capital in as many days, witnesses and doctors said Saturday.

The strike came just 24 hours after one person was killed and another injured in a similar barrage on the same area, locals said.

A 10-year-old girl, a 15-year-old boy and a male shopkeeper died in the latest strike, which hit a densely populated housing estate near the city centre Saturday afternoon, they said.

Four other people, mainly shop owners and local residents buying supplies, were injured when the single Soviet-built BM 21 rocket hit a row of thriving stores.

"These people were just ordinary civilians battling to survive in already difficult circumstances when they were needlessly torn apart," Asdul Nabi, a 23-year-old policeman and witness to the carnage said.

"We are tired of being caught between the various warring factions here," local resident military professor Mohammed Anwar told AFP.

"Each group wants power and most seem ready to let thousands of civilians in in pursuit of that. It's a tragedy for mankind," he said.

The Taleban militia who have been besieging Kabul for more than five months fired the rocket, defence sources here said. No independent confirmation of who was responsible was immediately available.

Hundreds of civilians in this war-battered city have died in the regular rocket and artillery salvoes which have pounded the city for months.

The Islamic Taleban claim the beleaguered Kabul government is illegitimate and have vowed to topple it and install Islamic law across Afghanistan.

The militiamen, the latest faction to emerge here in the past four years of bloody civil war, entered the fray in 1994 pledging they would purify the country of corruption and banditry.

They rose up to oppose the mojahedin factions who in 1989 forced Soviet troops out of Afghanistan ending their 10-year occupation, and who have since begun battling each other for control of the country.

More than 25,000 civilians are believed to have died in the past four years of fighting, which has mainly been concentrated around Kabul.

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Afghanistan: Army Repulses Taleban Attack on Area South of Kabul

LD1003174596 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night [9 March] the Islamic army resisted an offensive attack mounted by the Taleban on an area south of Kabul. A source reported to BAKHTAR that at about 2000 last night, the Islamic army forces neutralized an offensive by Benazir Bhutto's Taleban in the south of Kabul and inflicted heavy loss of life and material damage on the invaders.

Last night the Taleban fired rockets into residential areas of Kabul as a result of which one person was martyred and five others were injured. Exchanges of heavy weapon fire continued overnight.

Afghanistan: 1 Killed, 5 Injured in Shelling of Kabul

LD1103103896 Tehran IRNA in English 1015 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, March 11, IRNA — At least one was killed and five others were injured in the latest shelling of Kabul on Sunday, the Security Commission in the Afghan capital announced Sunday night.

Disclosing that two houses were also destroyed in the bombardment, the Kabul Security Commission accused Taleban forces, which have taken positions in south and southwestern Kabul, of staging the attacks against innocent people in the besieged capital.

Kabul has witnessed heavy shellings in the past six months, killing and injuring more than 2,000 people and destroying scores of houses.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: PM Requests Biswas To End 'Crisis'

BK0903095596 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has requested President Abdur Rahman Biswas to seek initiative for a dialogue with the opposition leaders for resolving the current political crisis.

BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] joint secretary general and food and agriculture minister, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, said this while briefing newsmen in Dhaka last night. Mr. Bhuiyan called upon the opposition parties to call off their program soon as the prime minister has requested the president to seek an initiative for discussions as desired by the opposition. He said the opposition should call off their program considering the sufferings of the people and damage to the economy and join the discussions.

Replying to a question, Mr. Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan expressed his optimism that the prevailing political crisis will be over very soon as the government is ready to fulfill the demand of a nonparty government for conducting future elections and holding of fresh elections as early as possible.

Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina addressed a grand rally of Bangladesh Ainjibi Samannay Parishad [lawyers coordination council] in Dhaka yesterday. Addressing the rally, she repeated her call to the president take an initiative for discussion with all political parties by tomorrow and constitute a neutral caretaker government for holding the fresh general elections in May.

At a news conference in Dhaka yesterday, Jammat-i-Islami Chief Gholam Azam said if the justification of a caretaker government is accepted, the president should be allowed to form such a government so that elections will be held by the 15th of May next.

Bangladesh: President Invites Zia, Opposition for Talks

BK0903161696 Hong Kong AFP in English 1549 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, March 9 (AFP) — Bangladeshi President Abdur Rahman Biswas Saturday invited the opposition and ruling parties for immediate talks on Bangladesh's staggering political standoff, an official statement said.

"Formal letters from President Biswas inviting the leaders of the political parties and groups represented in the 5th parliament have been issued tonight," the presidential statement said, adding "it is expected that talks with the political leaders will start tomorrow (Sunday).

Bangladesh: Biswas Accepts Invitation for Talks

BK0903164396 Hong Kong AFP in English 1647 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, March 9 (AFP) — Bangladesh's main opposition leader Sheikh Hasina Wajed announced late Saturday that she has agreed to join all-party talks initiated by President Abdur Rahman Biswas to end the political crisis.

"I have already made my views known to the president and have requested him to fix a time" for the talks, she said in a statement.

Her general secretary Zillur Rahman, confirming the opposition leader's latest move, told AFP by telephone:

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"We are now waiting for the president to let us know the time of the meeting."

Biswas Saturday invited the opposition and ruling parties for immediate talks on Bangladesh's staggering political standoff, an official statement said.

"Formal letters from President Biswas inviting the leaders of the political parties and groups represented in the fifth parliament have been issued tonight," the presidential statement said.

"It is expected that talks with the political leaders will start tomorrow (Sunday)," it added.

Bangladesh: President Talks With Awami League, Other Parties

BK1003124896 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Awami League leaders led by party chief Sheikh Hasina held a meeting with President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban [President House] today. They exchanged views with the president on the prevailing political impasse in the country and suggested several ways to resolve it. The Awami League leaders included: Abdus Samad Azad, Zillur Rahman, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofael Ahmed, Mohammad Nasim, Abdur Razzaq, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdul Momen, and [name indistinct].

Later, leaders of the Jatiya Party and Jamaat-i-Islami separately held meetings with the president. They held extensive discussions on the country's political situation. The leaders made some suggestions to resolve the prevailing political impasse. Jatiya Party leaders included the party's Acting Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Shah Moazzem Hussain and (?Manzurul) Haq Chowdhury.

The Jamaat-i-Islami leaders included party General Secretary Maulana Motiur Rahman Nizami, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahed, Mohammad Qamaruzzaman, Sheikh Ansar Ali, Mohammad Nazrul Islam, Professor Mujibur Rahman, Abdul Qader Molla, and A.K.M. Azharul Islam.

Leaders of the Bangladesh Workers Party, Islami Oikya Jote, and National Democratic Party and a delegation led by former parliament member (?Shamsur Rahman) are also expected to hold similar meetings with the president.

It may be recalled that the president has called upon the leaders of various political parties and groups to hold frank discussions on various aspects of the current complicated political situation in the country and to find an acceptable solution to it in the greater interest of the nation.

Bangladesh: Details on President's Talks With Leaders

BK1003165996 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Abdur Rahman Biswas held separate meetings with the leaders of various political parties representing the fifth Jatiya Sangsad [parliament] at Bangabhaban [President House] in Dhaka today. The meetings were held in response to the invitation extended to them by the president yesterday for resolving the current political stalemate.

Welcoming the political leaders, the president appreciated their good gesture in responding to his invitation quickly [words indistinct] social peace and stability. The political leaders who [words indistinct] Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-i-Islami. They thanked the president for taking the initiative and said that they will sincerely cooperate with the president in his endeavor in the greater interest of the nation.

President Biswas said he will try to resolve the present crisis on the basis of the opinion expressed by the leaders of all political parties with their help and cooperation.

Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina led an 11-member delegation at the discussion, which included Abdus Samad Azad, Zillur Rahman, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Toael Ahmed, Mohammad Nasim, Abdur Razzaq, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdul Momen, and M.A. Jalil.

Jatiya Party Acting Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury led an 11- member party delegation which included Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Shah Moazzem Hussain, Munirul Haq Chowdhury, Advocate Fazle Rabbi and Gholam Sarwar Milan.

Jamaat-i-Islami Bangladesh Secretary General Motiur Rahman Nizami led a 10-member party delegation which included Ali Ahsan, Mohammad Mojahed, Mohammad Qamaruzzaman, Maulana Abdus Sobhan, Sheikh Ansar Ali, Mohammad Nazrul Islam, Professor Mujibur Rahman, Abdul Qader Molla, and A.K.M. Azharul Islam.

The leaders submitted to the president separate memorandums which included release of remaining political prisoners, cancellation of last general election, formation of a caretaker government in consultation with political leaders, resignation of the present government, and holding of fresh general election within May this year.

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Three opposition leaders detained [words indistinct] were released today. They are: Jatiya Party Secretary General Anwar Hossain Manju, Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation A.B.M. Muhiuddin Chowdhury, and Awami League leader Matia Chowdhury.

Bangladesh: 'Stray Incidents' Reported During Opposition Strike

BK1003170396 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The second day of the indefinite noncooperation program of the opposition political parties passed off peacefully today barring some stray incidents. In the capital, there were some incidents of sporadic bomb blasts and minor clashes between opposition activists and the police. A large number of shops were open today. Motor vehicles were off the roads, but in some areas few minibuses and auto rickshaws were seen plying. Rickshaws plied as usual. Train communications were disrupted as the opposition activists put obstructions at different places. All international and all but one domestic flights were operated as usual. Water transport plied normally on all the routes. Attendance in government offices was normal, but most of the private offices remained close.

In Chittagong, the day passed off peacefully, except for some sporadic explosion of hand bombs, crackers, and minor clashes. Rickshaws plied, shops remained open, but motorized vehicles excepting ambulances and police vans were off the roads.

Bangladesh: Editorial Condemns India's 'Military Buildup'

BK1103102496 Dhaka DAINIK INQILAB in Bengali 2 Mar 96 p 5

[Editorial: "India's Defense Expenditure"]

[FBIS Translated Text] India has raised its defense spending 9.7 times [as published] to $7.9 billion, saying that it will not compromise on the security issue. Agencies quoted Finance Minister Manmohan Singh as saying that he feels that India's defense preparations are essential to its national security. The Indian finance minister added that rules and regulations relating to the allocation of funds in the federal annual budget for the defense sector will be further amended.

India's extravagant defense spending reminds us of its massive and worrying arms buildup. India's refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, its military adventurism, conventional and strategic war preparations, and its tendency to always increase its defense budget point to India's military expansionist designs. Needless to say, this buildup constitutes a danger to world peace. It also poses a threat to stability and the atmosphere of good- neighborliness in the region. Since it became independent from British rule in 1947, India has not only seized numerous politically independent kingdoms in India, it has also been consistently trying to usurp by its military might the other dominions [as published] which also won freedom from British rule but are now struggling hard to defend their freedom. In fact, the philosophy of India's foreign policy is to destroy others and develop itself. The Indian military expansionism, as reflected in its massive defense spending, is also posing a threat to economic advancement, national developmental efforts and the flourishing of independent cultures of India's neighbors. India tops the list of countries in the world having high defense spending.

India is least sensitive to the UN General Assembly resolution of 19 December 1995 which demanded an end to all kinds of nuclear tests so as to ensure peace and stability in the world. The excuse of Pakistan's arms production as cited by India in this context is ridiculous as it was India itself, by first conducting a nuclear blast in this part of the world in 1974, which forced Pakistan to embark on nuclear research. Ongoing Indian efforts to develop nuclear-powered weapons and nuclear-capable missiles and warplanes only substantiate that instead of using nuclear technology for peaceful purposes India is using it to develop weapons to destroy and usurp others' territories. The massive nature of India's military buildup covering both conventional and nuclear weapons for use on land, sea and air poses a threat to this region of the world, and has created a very delicate situation. India's strategic efforts and its political, economic and cultural expansion are consistent with its policy of expansionism. This effort is destabilizing the whole region, and hampering economic development in this area. World leaders, however, seem unperturbed by this irrefutable truth. It was because of a lack of farsightedness of the world's big powers or their lack of interest that a large chunk of Europe was captured by fascist Germans. Even today, after the end of the Cold War, we find that the inability to identify the threats to regional stability has caused chaos in Lebanon, disturbances in Kashmir, and resulted in mass graves in Chechnya and Bosnia. Just as Israel's power-haughtiness is preventing the promotion of peace in the Middle East, India's military expansion too is preventing South Asia from becoming an abode of peace. This poorest region of the world is becoming more unstable and poorer due to a lack of security. It is in fact a major disaster for the world economy and for global fraternity.

The international community should, therefore, exert all kinds of diplomatic and economic pressure on India to force it to behave like a member of the civilized

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world. India should be restrained from pursuing a policy of expansionism in the interest of world peace. India should know that the best policy for keeping itself safe is to ensure the safety of others.

India

India: Government Urged To Develop Formal Defense Policy

BK0903115796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The standing committee of parliament on defense has asked the government to consider evolving a formal national defense policy.

In its sixth report placed in the parliament yesterday, the committee recommended an institutional mechanism to monitor the state of defense preparedness in the country. The mechanism with adequate support structures will oversee progress of defense modernization, upgradation and acquisition. The committee advocated for allocation of funds for projects and acquisitions outside the ambit of five-year plans.

On indigenization, the committee has asked the Defense Ministry to chalk out a time-bound strategy in a mission (?mood) for the whole range of weapon systems. It also urged the government to take immediate decision on the serial production of Agni missiles for induction into the armed forces.

India: Minister Concerned Over Assistance to Pakistan Nuclear Plan

BK1103130396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has conveyed to China and the United States its concern on external assistance to Pakistan's weapon-oriented nuclear program. The external affairs minister told the Lok Sabha today that recent reports of China exporting certain critical nuclear components to Pakistan have come to the notice of the government. New Delhi continues to take all necessary measures to safeguard India's security.

India: Forces 'Will Respond Effectively' to Any Pakistan Firing

BK1003162796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The union minister of state for home, Mr. M. Kamson, has said that security forces are well-prepared to meet any eventuality from across the border in Jammu and Kashmir. Referring to the recent unprovoked firing by Pakistani Rangers on the Indian posts in the state, the minister said that if they start shooting, Indian forces will respond effectively. Talking to newsmen, Mr. Kamson said the government is determined to check insurgent activities in different parts of the country.

Speaking at a press conference in Srinagar today, the Jammu and Kashmir chief secretary, Mr. Ashok Kumar, said that the administration is fully geared for the proposed assembly elections in the state, but it is for the center to decide when to hold the polls. He said there is great improvement in law and order situation, and the people in the state are extending full cooperation in the development process as well as in containing militancy.

India: Minister Says Kashmiri Heads Respond 'Favorably' To Talks Offer

BK1103091796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Talks between the government and Kahsmiri militants are likely to be held after the current session of parliament to restore peace in Jammu and Kashmir. The home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, told newspersons yesterday that the center is prepared for such talks without any preconditions from either side. He said that the militants and some Hurriyat leaders have responded favorably to the government's offer to hold discussions with them. The home minister said it will not be possible to hold assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir [J and K] and Uttar Pradesh simultaneously with the Lok Sabha polls because of shortage of paramilitary forces.

On Uttarkhand, he said efforts are on to solve the problem amicably.

The All Parties Coordination Committee of J and K leaders have called for the forging of a united front against antinational and communal forces in all the three regions of the state. The meeting of the coordination committee was held in Jammu yesterday to discuss the present situation in the state in the background of the decline in militancy and the increasing public demand for restoration of political process in the state. Convener of the coordination committee, Mr. Bhim Singh, later said that the leaders of the different political parties have viewed with optimism that the general public has started condemning violence, militancy, and the gun culture.

India: Kashmir Leader Shabbir Shah Released

BK0803163596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the Kashmir valley, People's League leader Shabbir Shah, was taken into preventive custody this morning after he and some of his

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supporters tried to defy prohibitory orders in Srinagar. His supporters also tried to block the traffic and pelted stones on the police in which the SHO [Station House Officer] of the area and four policemen were injured.

Shabbir Shah was, however, released later.

India: Kashmir Governor Says Pakistan Shooting Civilians

BK0903160196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Jammu and Kashmir governor, General K.V. Krishna Rao, has announced that the victims of the Pakistani firing in the border areas will be given relief on the pattern available to the victims of militant action.

Addressing a public meeting at the border town of Punch, he said Pakistan is indulging in unprovoked firing in border areas and targeting the civilian population out of its frustration. He said Pakistan's proxy war to grab Kashmir has failed like its three earlier wars on India.

India: Militants Surrender; Efforts on Kashmir Hostages Noted

BK1003145996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the Kashmir Valley, 80 militants have surrendered before the police in Baramula today. This is the largest group of militants which has surrendered before the Kashmir Police during the last six years of militancy in the state. They also handed over a large quantity of arms and ammunition; 53 of the militants who surrendered today belong to Hizbul Mujahideen.

Meanwhile, the director general of police said in Baramula today that efforts are on at various levels to secure the release of four Western tourists held hostage by Al-Faran in the state.

India: Minister Promises 'Severest' Punishment in Arms-Drop Case

BK0803161896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, assured the Rajya Sabha today that the severest possible action will be taken against anyone, howsoever high he may be, found guilty in the arms-dropping incident in Puruliya. He said the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] is seized of the matter and all necessary steps are being taken to prevent recurrence of such incidents.

Replying to the debate on a calling-attention motion on the subject moved by Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta, CPI [Communist Party of India] and others, the home minister conceded that coordination system among various agencies needs to be improved. He said the government has accepted the recommendations made in this regard by the interministerial committee which was set up after the Puruliya incident. Responding to pointed questions by members, Mr. Chavan agreed that the letter from the Center forewarning the West Bengal Government about the possible arms-drop should not have been sent by general post.

Urging the members not to treat the incident as a party issue, the minister said some forces are keen on destabilizing our country. The CBI is inquiring into all aspects. Initiating the debate, Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta alleged that the government failed to take prompt action despite having prior information on the arms-dropping incident. Mr. Gupta said the international conspiracy was hatched in Bangkok and those involved had a strong base in Pakistan.

The CBI has secured proof of the involvement of the religious organization, Anand Marg, in the Puruliya arms-dropping case. Search operations have been carried out in 35 offices of the Anand Marg in the country so far by the CBI. The joint director of the CBI, Dr. Upen Biswas, told All India Radio Calcutta correspondent this afternoon that the documents seized from these offices are indicative of the link. He added a high-tech sophisticated telephone set has been seized from the Anand Marg office at Varanasi and this is being examined by the CBI now with the help of telecom experts. Admitting that the CBI is yet to arrest the four main culprits — Kim Peter Davy, Satya Narain Gowda, Daya M. Anand, and Rameshan Bhanu, he said Kim Davy is suspected to have left the country.

India: District Party Chiefs Express Full Faith in Rao Leadership

BK1103045396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The district Congress-I presidents have expressed full faith in the leadership of the party president, Mr. Narasimha Rao. At their two-day meeting which began in New Delhi yesterday, they congratulated the prime minister for not interfering with the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] investigations in the hawala [illegal money transfer] and other cases. Some of them asked the party high command to ensure that people with clean images are given the party tickets for the coming Lok Sabha and assembly polls. The meeting was opened by the party general secretary, Mr.

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Janardhanz Poojary, and will be addressed by the party president, Mr. Narasimha Rao, today.

India: Party Leader Rules Out Joining 'Any Front'

BK0903160896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The BSP [Bahujan Samaj Party] president, Mr. Kansi Ram, has said that his party will not join any front.

Speaking to correspondents in Lucknow today, he said if the Janata Dal enters into any alliance with the Samajwadi Party, the BSP will have no understanding with them.

Meanwhile, the Samajwadi Janata Party general secretary, Mr. Ghulam Mushir Ahmad Lari, has joined the BSJ.

India: 8 More 'Top' Politicians To Stand Trial in Hawala Case

BK1103105096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The special court hearing the hawala [illegal money transfer] case has summoned eight more top politicians to face trial. The special judge, Mr. V.B. Gupta, today issued the summons while taking cognizance of the charge sheets filed by the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] against them. The politicians are Mr. N.D. Tiwari, Mr. C.K. Jaffar Sharief, Mr. R.K. Dhawan, Mr. Sharad Yadav, Mr. Harmohan Dhawan, Mr. Natwar Singh. Mr. B.D. Dhakne, and Mr. Ranjit Singh. The summons are returnable on March 18th for Mr. Tiwari, Mr. R.K. Dhawan, Mr. Harmohan Dhawan, and Mr. K. Natwar Singh, while Mr. Yadav, Mr. Sharief, Mr. Ranjit Singh and Mr. B.D. Dhakne have been summoned on 19th March.

In a related development, the Jain brothers and their employees Messrs. S.K. Jain, N.K. Jain, B.R. Jain, and J.K. Jain appeared in person before the court and applied for bail in respect of these eight charge sheets. They were granted bail on the production of personal bonds of 10,000 rupees and a surety of a like amount each. Mr. Arvind Netam was also granted bail by the special judge on his furnishing a personal bond of 10,000 rupees and a surety of a like amount. The court reserved its orders till Wednesday in respect of charge sheets against the former NTPC [National Thermal Power Commission] Chairman Mr. P.S. Bami and four other bureaucrats. It directed the CBI to hand over of copies of charge sheets and documents to the counsels of Mr. Madhavrao Scindia and Mr. Bal Ram Jhakhar and fixed their hearings on the 20th and 22d of this month.

Iran

Iran: Velayati Denies Financial, Military Support to Hamas

LD0903114596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners, as we informed you earlier, Foreign Affairs Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati took part in a news conference attended by Iranian and foreign reporters today. Our correspondent has a report on this.

[Correspondent] Our country's foreign minister said that several regional issues were discussed during his meeting with the Russian president, and that the two sides reached a number of new agreements on regional and international issues.

He said that, with these new agreements, relations between Tehran and Moscow have entered a new stage, which in the long term could serve the interests of the two countries in the region and in the world as a whole.

He added: In the meeting with the Russian president, ways of waging a comprehensive campaign against international terrorism were also discussed. In a message to his Iranian counterpart, the Russian president called for cooperation between the two countries in fighting international terrorism.

In reply to a question by a foreign reporter about the forthcoming summit of the heads of a number of states in Cairo, Mr. Velayati said: Iran supports any international initiative to fight terrorism in a principled manner. This is because Iran itself is one of the victims of terrorism and many terrorists who have fled Iran now live in sanctuaries provided by Western and Arab countries.

He added: We believe that fighting terrorism must take place according to an international decision which should be based on a general consensus, and not on the objectives and interests of a particular country.

Asked whether Iran would continue supporting militant Palestinian groups and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] or not, Mr. Velayati said: We support the aspirations of the oppressed people of Palestine. We have never given financial or military support to Hamas or other militant Palestinian groups.

On the effects of U.S. pressure designed to cut Iran's relations with Europe, the foreign minister said: Our relations with Europe and other countries of the world are based on mutual interests. I believe those countries

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that continue their allegations against Iran will regret doing so in future.

Concerning Iran's stance on the relations of some Islamic countries with Israel, Mr. Velayati said: We do not dictate anything to others. We work according to our basic principles. However, we have several times noted the dangers arising from an increase in Israel's influence and the need to confront Israel in the region.

Iran: Further on Velayati Comments on Palestinians

LD0903153296 Tehran IRNA in English 1433 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Tehran, March 9, IRNA — Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati said here on Saturday [9 March] emphasized the Islamic Republic's support for the rights of the Palestinian people but, he added, Iran never rendered any financial or material help to them.

Speaking at a press conference, Velayati reiterated Iran's opposition to terrorist acts and said in his meeting with Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Thursday, he received the latter's message for President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani concerning Moscow's readiness to join international efforts to combat terrorism. [passage omitted]

On the stand of the Islamic Republic towards the issue of compromise in the Middle East, the foreign minister said at present the U.S.-sponsored peace plan for the Middle East has not been successful and the Palestinian nation is still facing discrimination and difficulties.

He said there are about four million Palestinian refugees living outside Palestine and the Palestinians still see that the Zionist regime can threaten their life ad safety whenever its wishes to do so.

All evidences indicated that the so-called peace plan masterminded by the U.S. and the Zionist regime had failed, Velayati said, adding that it had already been anticipated because the plan had shortcomings and was void of sound foundations.

On the allegations raised by the U.S. and the Zionist regime accusing Iran of involvement in recent incidents in occupied Palestine, Velayati said the U.S. and the Zionist regime were looking for an excuse to blame others for the failure of their peace plan.

Velayati said that if the American peace plan for the Middle East failed, no doubt it would affect the forthcoming elections in Israel and the U.S.

On his recent visit to nine Central and Caucasian republics, he said he had discussed bilateral ties and international issues with the heads of states of the host countries.

On regional developments, including Tajikistan and Karabakh issues, Velayati said he had also held talks with officials of the countries somehow linked to the conflicts.

On Tajikistan, he said agreements were reached on extension of ceasefire for another four months and exchange of prisoners of war (POWs) as a jesture of good intention with an aim of continuing peace talks between the Tajik Government and the opposition.

On Karabakh, Velayati remarked, talks were held with the belligerent parties, Azerbaijan and Armenia and emphasized that resolving the conflict would be possible solely through peaceful means. He said that views of the parties involved were more lenient than ever before.

On his negotiations with Russian officials, the Iranian foreign minister underlined good relations with Russia, adding that Moscow was determined to have long-term consolidated ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On possible measures by certain Western countries to influence Iran's independent diplomacy, Velayati said if the West imagined that by exerting pressure it could hinder Iran from treading its path, it was mistaken, terming such an idea as immature.

The Iranian foreign minister said Iran has a strategic situation and constructive relations with 15 neighboring countries including Russia and China. If Iran's relations with the West were weakened, it would face no problem in solving its issues.

Iran: Envoy To France Says Bombing Allegations Unfounded

LD0803230596 Tehran IRNA in English 2204 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Paris, France, March 8, IRNA — Iranian Ambassador to Paris Hamid Reza Asefi told Radio France-Info here Friday that the allegations that ascribed this weeks' bombing in Tel Aviv to Iran were totally unfounded and were levelled by Iran's enemies for the purpose of suppressing other facts.

He said Iran itself had been a victim of terrorism and that many Iranian officials had been assassinated at various intervals without the West ever reacting to those type of homicide in Iran, and without any sympathetic words by them.

The Iranian ambassador said the Islamic Government expected that the international community in order to sound impartial had to condemn terrorist acts as a

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universal policy rather than condemn terrorism only eclectically, frowning at it when done by one group and condoning it when done by another group.

The interview with the Iranian ambassador to Paris also coincided with the polling in Iran for the fifth Islamic Legislative Assembly in Iran, Majles.

Iran: President Votes, Urges 'Popular' Majles

LD0803133696 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0720 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Announcer] Dear viewers: This is the Jamaran Hoseyniyyeh [Khomeyni's former residence], home to polling station number 121. President Hashemi-Rafsanjani came here at 0850 [0520 GMT] this morning to cast his vote for 30 Tehran constituency candidates. [passage omitted]

[Begin recording] [Announcer] Your Excellency Mr. Hashemi- Rafsanjani: I would like to congratulate you for the staging of the fifth Islamic Majles elections. How many times have you taken part in elections?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I have lost count. I have participated in all the elections we have had since the early days of the revolution.

[Announcer] Have you actually selected the maximum number of 30 candidates?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Yes. I selected the names of 30 candidates after studying various lists of group and independent candidates.

[Announcer] What do you think are the special characteristics of these elections? What are its important features seen from an international perspective?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I see a few new features. One is that there seems to be a greater variety of candidates than the earlier rounds, and this gives people more choice. The second important point is that the elections are taking place at a time when the Americans have increased their propaganda pressures on us under various baseless pretexts. Of course their aim is to dishearten our people. However, past experience shows that this has the opposite effect and our people become even more vigilant.

The other point which is noteworthy is that we are at present on the path of construction and development. The first and second development plans have been approved and a significant momentum has got under way in our country. Cultural, moral, and revolutionary issues have gained a new sensitivity, and this is because we have been pitted against the Americans and the Israelis in a propaganda war. A great deal of vigilance is required in the process of forming the [new] Majles. This should be a strong Majles which ought to bear all these issues in mind. It should also be a popular Majles which should rely completely on people's free vote.

My advice to all the brothers and sisters who serve the people in this capacity [Majles] is that they should be trustworthy deputies. Experiences show that people's votes can be trusted, and we have always benefited from our attention to public opinion. If the Majles fulfils what people have asked for with their votes, then this will certainly be in the interest of the country.

The other interesting feature of these elections is the presence of women. In my opinion, it seems that the women now believe that they can have a serious social presence. Fortunately they have decided to enter the public arena this time in a noteworthy manner. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Iran: 'Enthusiastic' Turnout Reported in Voting

LD0803211596 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1900 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Announcer] Dear viewers, our direct link with the State Elections Headquarters has been established. Mr. Nowbaveh, good evening, please could you gives us an update on how voting is proceeding [video shows two men sitting at a desk; one is Nowbaveh, the other is Tabesh]

[Nowbaveh] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Good evening dear viewers of the Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran Network-2.

Voting for the fifth Majles — that is, the voting time came to an end officially, approximately 40 minutes ago. I will ask 'Ali Reza Tabesh, head of the State Elections Headquarters, to give us some details about the preparations for staging these successful elections.

[Tabesh] Just as you pointed out, one of the very important stages of the elections, that is, the registration of names and casting of votes, took place today. Polling started at 0800 this morning, and in view of the large turnout, we had to extend voting time until 2200, and this extended time for registration and voting came to an end officially in all the 30,000 polling stations.

This program came to an end in a very good and splendid manner. The impressive presence of the people was unprecedented. We will, God willing, try to announce the percentage of those who voted soon.

The reports received, up to this moment, by the State Elections Headquarters from the constituencies, all indicate that there was an enthusiastic turnout. Also, we had no problems or incidents, God be thanked, during

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the whole length of the day. [passage omitted] We are grateful to the people of our country. [passage omitted]

[Announcer] There is a question from Mr. Khish[illegible] [not further identified] in the studio.

[Khishandaz] I would like to ask Mr. Tabesh a question. At what point will counting begin and when can people expect to hear the results of their vote?

[Tabesh] The reading and counting of the votes is the next stage in the process that has been set down in the [election] laws. Once the local polling officers are sure that everyone has cast their votes and that there is no one left in the polling stations, we will count the ballot papers that have and have not been used, and then they will hold a special meeting during which the ballot box will be open in the course of formalities. Articles, 18,19,20, and 21 of the law envisages special regulations for this procedure. As a consequence, right from this very moment that we are speaking to you and to our dear people, there are some ballot boxes that have been opened by the local polling station officers and are in the process of counting the votes.

[Khishandaz] So, can we be hopeful that the results of small ballot boxes, that is, small towns, will gradually be known and made public.

[Tabesh] Of course the State Election Headquarters will hopefully continue its work in the manner that it should, and as soon as it receives the result of the vote counts from different constituencies, it will inform the public. [passage omitted]

Iran: Voting Extended To Cope With 'Huge Turnout'

LD0803165096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The State Elections Headquarters announced that in the wake of highly enthusiastic welcome given to the elections process by our dear people in the Islamic homeland and thanks to their huge turnout in the polling stations, most of the country's governors and governors general in various polling stations have asked for an extension of the voting time. In the wake of these requests, the interior minister has agreed to extend the voting time in all the polling stations in the country until 2100 [1730 GMT] tonight.

According to a report of the Central News Unit, this statement should be regarded as an official circular to all polling stations in the country.

Iran: Polls Close; Vote Counting Starts

LD0803203796 Tehran IRNA in English 2025 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 8, IRNA — Polling time expired at 22:00 hours local time Friday at the end of one-day national elections for members of the Islamic legislative assembly of Iran, Majles.

Counting of the votes has already started and results for each city are to be published as they gradually become ready starting Saturday.

More than 3,000 candidates, representing groups or bidding independently, were running for the Majles nationally.

Iran: Election Results of 47 Constituences Announced

LD0903221796 Tehran IRNA in English 2201 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 9, IRNA — The election results of 47 constituencies have so far been announced with 52 candidates finding their way to the 270-seat Majles.

Candidates in 38 others will have to wait till April 19 for the run-off elections since they failed to get the required one-third of the ballots cast for getting through to the parliament.

Elections were held in 196 constituencies on Friday March 8 for the fifth 4-year term of the parliament.

In Sarab, East Azarbaijan Province, Hoseyn Anvari made it to the Majles made it to the Majles, while reports from the Saqez-Baneh constituency of Kurdestan Province indicate that the vote was decided in the favour of 'Ali-Ne'matzadeh.

Reza Abdollahi was voted to the Majles by the people of Mahneshan in Zanjan Province with more than half of the electorate backing him.

In the Razan constituency of Hamedan Province, Mohammad Mahdi Mofatteh won the right to represent the local people in the parliament.

The names of those elected from Sari, capital of the Caspian Province of Mazandaran, were announced as Ezzatollah Akbari Talarposhti, 'Ali-Asghar Yousefzadeh and Abolqasem Rouhi Sorkhkolaie.

Seats for the Boroujen and Lordegan constituencies of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari were won by Ebrahim Karimi and Abolqasem Alavi.

In Saravan, Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Fakhreddin Reza-Zehi emerged as winner.

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In the Faridan-Fereydounshahr constituency of Isfahan Province, the vote was decided in favour of Gholam-Reza Heydari Darani.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Seyyed Alireza Ebadi won the Birjand and Nahbandan seat in Khorasan Province, while in Shahroud, Semnan Province, the winner was 'Ali-Asghar Ahmadi.

Of the other candidates who got through to the parliament the following were from constituencies in Khorasan Province in the northeast:

Musa Qorbani from Qaenat, Mohammad Baqer Zakeri from Qochan, Seyyed 'Ali-Reza Afqahi from Sabzevar, Mohammad-Mahdi Khazaei from Fariman, Sarakhs, Ahmadabad and Razavieh, Hassan Razmian from Dargaz, Mohammad Azimi from Torqabeh-Chenaran, Seyyed Reza Nurouz- Zadeh from Esfrayen, Gholam Haidar Ibarahim Baysalami from Khawaf, Seyyed Abul-Qasem Rezaei from Bojnourd, and Seyyed Mashallah Shakibi from Ferdouse Tabas.

From East Azarbaijan Province in the northwest the following candidates were elected: Kamel Abedin-Zadeh from Khoei, Seyyed Mostafa Seyyed Hashemi from Maragheh, and Haj Valiullah Ahmadi Rad- Sara from Ahar-Haris.

From Fars Province Khodadad Qobadi was elected from Oqlid and Gholam-Hussein Nouzari from Kazeroun. From Tehran Province, Gholam Abbas Aqa-'Ali Khani from Boinzahra-Avaj and Asghar Nasiri from Saveh made their way to the Majles.

Results from Khuzestan in the southwest indicate that the winners so far announced are Seyyed Jasem Sa'adi from Andimeshk-Shush, Mohammad-'Ali Sheikh from Shushtar, and Jasem Jadari from Dashte Azadegan.

The other results were 'Ali Zadsar from Jiroft (Kerman), Seyyed Abbas Pak-Nejad from Yazd, Asghar Raisi Dehkordi from Shahr-e Kord (Charmahal-Bakhtiari), Bahaeddin Adab from Sanandaj, Aivan Dareh and Kamyaran (Kurdestan), Mohammad Karimian from Piranshahr-Sardasht (West Azarbaijan), Ismail Dousti from Khohdasht (Lorestan), Gholam- Reza Ashrafi from Zabol (Sistan-Baluchestan), and Abdul-Ghafar Shoja from Bandar Anzali (Gilan).

Iran: Militant Clergy Association Wins 25 Percent of Votes

LD1003102796 Tehran IRNA in English
0823 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 10, IRNA — Of the total votes counted as of Saturday night for 100 seats in the 270-member Majlis, candidates backed by the Jameh-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM) [Militant Clergy Association] have won about 25 percent and other groups 14 percent, the English morning daily TEHRAN TIMES reported Sunday.

The election headquarters announced Saturday that the results of 44 constituencies had been finalized while those of 17 others were left undecided and would go to a run-off on April 20, the paper added.

It said that JRM candidates won both seats in the city of Qom, central Iran, and scored victory in most regions in the southern province of Fars and the northern provinces.

Candidates from the JRM contested in the race together with coalition of moderate professionals and technocrats, TEHRAN TIMES added.

Iran: IRNA Reports Election Turnout by Minorities

LD0803163296 Tehran IRNA in English
1546 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 8, IRNA — Iranian religious minorities have had eye-catching turnout at special polling booths set aside for them in Tehran.

From the early hours of Friday, the Armenians formed long queues outside their polling centers in the capital.

Women, men, old and young Armenians cast their votes in the ballot boxes to displayed their correct understanding of their country's situation in the world. They showed that they are sympathetic to their fellow Muslim countrymen.

An Armenian citizen of Tehran told IRNA that they have massively participated in the polls to help the country with its development programs.

Another Armenian citizen whose wife recently gave birth to a baby asked officials at the polling station to take a ballot box to his home so that her wife could cast her ballot.

Ms. Ajik Mardakhyan said participating in the election was a national duty for her. She said since religious minorities in Iran shared equal rights with their Muslim compatriots she wanted her elected representative to safeguard such an equality of rights.

Another Armenian, Amin Motaref said, "Since we are making use of the country's possibilities we should fulfil our duty of taking part in the elections."

Rafi Shah Mirzayan said electing a representative meant neither supporting specific minority group nor rejecting another, it serves the interest of the country as a whole.

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Vartan Grigoryan said, curbing inflation and rooting out deprivation from the country is the major duty of future Majles deputies.

Iran: Further on Election Turnout by Minorities

LD0803191896 Tehran IRNA in English 1840 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 8, IRNA — Religious minorities nationwide cast their ballots on Friday to elect five out of 18 candidates for the 5th Majles, which is to start activity on May 28, 1996.

Head of Iran's elections headquarters Alireza Tabesh said here Friday that the central polling stations for the religious minorities were located in Isfahan and Tehran.

A total of 19 polling stations have been set up for Asyrian and Caldonians, 19 for the Jews, 26 for Armenians north of Iran, seven for Armenians south of Iran and 17 for Zoroastrians.

Head of the polling station for Armenians at Armenians' church Edik Nazarian told IRNA here on Friday that Armenians of Tehran were zealously present in the area for casting their votes to their candidates of their choice.

Guardians council representative to the polling station of Armenians Hamid Kordbacheh said here Friday that Armenians' turn out in the elections was "eye-catching" to the effect that they had stood in long lines to cast their ballots in the polls.

An Armenian of Tehran Siolina Koujarian told IRNA that she was waiting for about an hour to cast her vote.

Talking to IRNA, member of the executive board for elections of Armenians in central province Arat Keshishzadeh said here Friday that the provincial Armenians had referred to the polling station today like any other Iranian people to cast their vote.

Director general of elections for northwestern province of West Azarbaijan Mohammad-Reza Qolizadeh said here Friday that there were 10 polling stations in the province, two of which were in Salmas and eight others in Orumieh.

About 8,500 Christian minorities are living in West Azarbaijan at present.

Reports available from southern province of Kerman indicates that the provincial minorities had cast their votes for the candidates of their preference like any other Iranian national.

Meanwhile, an official at the polling station of Zoroastrians in Tehran Daryoush Owrangi said here Friday that Zoroastrians had been coming to the center in large numbers for casting their ballots since morning.

Owrangi said that six polling stations had been set up for Zoroastrians voting in Tehran in order for them to vote for one out of five candidates.

A total of five polling stations have also been set up in central province of Yazd for about 5,000 Zoroastrians to vote for their favourable candidate.

A Zoroastrian priest in Yazd Dinyar Shahzadi told IRNA that participation in the elections was a patriotic and religious duty and that he would vote for one trying to promote the honor and dignity for the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Another Zoroastrian priest Khodamorad Ganji told IRNA here Friday that among duties of Majles representatives would be to protect country's interests, therefore, one should vote for a representative who whole-heartedly believed in the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Reports from southwestern city of Ahvaz (Khouzestan) indicate that the minorities of Khuzestan Province, like any other provincial religious minorities, were zealously queuing at the polling stations in order to cast their ballots to elect the representative of their choice. The minorities included Jews, Assyrians, Catholics, Caladonians and Armenians.

One out of three Asyrian Caledonian nominees throughout Iran are to find their way to Majles.

Iran: Woman Elected to Majles From Esfahan; Further Results

LD1003124396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 10 Mar 96

[Interview of 'Ali Reza Tabesh, head of national election headquarters in Tehran, by announcer Tajnia and unidentified correspondent — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Tabesh] Election results for 190 constituencies, out of a total of 196 constituencies, have been forwarded to the national election headquarters. The results for the remaining six will be announced later. [passage omitted]

In the city of Esfahan, Ms. Nayereh Akhavan-e Bitaraf was elected in the first round of voting with 203,570 votes from a total of 564,270 votes cast. Four other deputies for this constituency will be elected in the second round.

The election of three deputies in the city of Shiraz has gone to the second round. [passage omitted]

The only six constituencies remaining are Tehran, Mashhad, Rasht, Gonab, and Malekan, as well as the

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southern Christian and Jewish communities. The results will be announced as the result come in.

In the 190 constituencies where votes have been counted, the total number of votes stands at 20,823,029.

[Tajnia] I hope the officials at the Tehran election headquarters are not too tired with all this work! Mr. Tabesh, when are you going to announce the results for the Tehran constituency?

[Tabesh] We will try to announce the results publicly as soon as we have determined the results from at least 300 or 400 election centers. We will then update the results as they come in. We hope to have something for the future news bulletins.

[Correspondent] May I ask Mr. Tabesh if he knows when the final results are going to be announced?

[Tabesh] We will try to announce the final results by the end of the week. Of course, results are in for 190 constituencies, and we have announced these results.

[Correspondent] Mr. Tabesh, many people want to know why the elections have gone to a second round in many constituencies? What is the reason?

[Tabesh] According to Article 8 of the election laws, deputies are elected in the first round if they receive more than one third of the votes cast. But in the second round they are elected by receiving a relative majority, whatever the number of votes. There has been a significant increase in the number of people voting in comparison to previous Majles elections, but because there were many candidates, the number of votes was divided between them. Therefore, the voting has moved to the second round. We have already announced the names of these constituencies.

Iran: Majles Election Results Show Women's 'Major Impact'

LD1103065796 Tehran IRNA in English 0644 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 11, IRNA — Women candidates made a major impact in the March 8 elections for the fifth Majlis, as evidenced by the results that have already been tabulated from Tehran and several other areas across the country, an English daily noted on Monday.

"Early results show that women are leading in many constituencies, including Tehran where G-6 backed Faezeh Hashemi, the daughter of President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, appears to be coming second after Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri," the morning paper 'IRAN NEWS' wrote in its editorial.

The same is true in Isfahan and Shiraz where female candidates have left their male counterparts behind, it said, adding that this trend indicated that our society was now attaching more importance to the role of women in national affairs.

Calling such a development as significant, it stressed that efforts should be continued to eradicate hurdles in the way of women to allow them to assume their crucial responsibilities to the nation.

Another surprising aspect of the just-concluded polls was that more than half of the country's future lawmakers are newcomers, the article further observed, noting that most of the new arrivals in the Majlis are independent and appear to have no affiliations with existing political factions.

Nevertheless, it quoted political observers as saying that a forecast of the future make-up of the next Majlis in terms of factional ratio is impossible to make at this present stage.

Iran: Statement on Procedures for Election Complaints

LD0903124396 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear viewers, I draw your attention to a statement issued by the Election Supervision Headquarters:

The Election Supervision HQ announces that, in accordance with Article 67 of the election law, those who wish to file a complaint about the way the elections for the fifth Islamic Consultative Majles have been held may submit their documented complaint to the secretariat of the Guardian Council within a week from today.

The Election HQ stresses that such complaints should be submitted to the secretariat of the Guardian Council in Tehran, Imam Khomeyni Avenue, Palestine Street.

The statement adds: Complaints to be dealt with must be accompanied by the complete details of the person who files the complaint. Filing a complaint without the accompanying evidence or one that is libelous could result in the prosecution of the person making the complaint.

Iran: No Complaints of Voting Irregularities in Elections

LD1003124796 Tehran IRNA in English 0933 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Mar 10 (IRNA) — Head of the central supervisory committee of the

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Guardians Council, Ayatollah Gholamreza Rezvani, said on Sunday that the counting of votes in different constituencies is being conducted in the presence of the council's observers.

He told IRNA that so far, no complaint has been received that could lead to the nullification of votes in a constituency.

As to vote tallies in Tehran constituencies, Rezvani said that final results might be out in a week's time.

Iran: By-Elections To Be Held in 13 Constituencies 19 Apr

LD0903113496 Tehran IRNA in English 0839 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 9, IRNA — The results of ballot countings in 13 constituencies for the fifth Majles elections so far indicate that no contender has secured the necessary number of votes to send him to the Majlis and, therefore, by-elections will be held in these constituencies.

The Majles elections were carried out on Friday [8 March] and the by-elections are slated for April 19, 1996.

The fifth Majles is to officially open in May 1996.

Iran: Rafsanjani Holds News Conference on Elections

LD1103113296 Tehran IRNA in English 0851 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 11, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani Monday attended a press conference at the request of foreign journalists who came here to cover the March 8 elections for the fifth Majles.

The president said that there is no obstacle on the establishment of parties in the country as long as they fall within the framework of the constitutional law in Iran.

Asked about Iraq, President Rafsanjani reiterated that the Islamic Republic is against the partition of that country.

On Palestine, he said Tehran supports the righteous campaign of the Palestinians and agrees with Palestinian combatants in their national struggle to liberate their country. Rafsanjani also stressed that every Muslim is duty-bound to support truth and the struggle against oppression.

Iran considers cooperation with Egypt as being in the interest of the world of Islam, he said. Referring to the Camp David accord as a negative point, he added, "I personally believe that we should work with Egypt to have better relations."

The president resembled Iran to a large reconstruction factory and criticized the manner with which news and propaganda around the world is being disseminated about the country. Talking of the role of women, he stated that he sincerely believed in women's participation in the nation's affairs.

In reply to repeated questions on Iran's stand towards Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad, the president said that "Iran condemns any act of terrorism." He however, added that Iran will not yield to U.S. pressure. "This will not happen. Iran is an independent country and it is not so easy to threaten a country like Iran. If Iran becomes insecure, the whole world will become insecure.

"The experience of the eight years of the Iraqi imposed war was as good experience, it proved that Iran is not a country to be threatened and no one will dare to repeat this experience. Iran today is strong enough to defend itself no matter who the other side is."

More on U.S. allegations on Iran's involvement in acts of terrorism he said that Washington is alleging Tehran with lies and baseless issues. He said, "we are honest and sincere in our remarks when we say we are against terrorism. One cannot find any single incident that Iran has been involved in it."

On the contrary Israel has put Palestinians in jail, martyred them and committed acts of atrocities against them. Meanwhile, the U.S. has been funding terrorism. Iran itself has been the victim of repeated acts of terrorism. In this presidential building alone a number of high ranking Iranian officials were martyred in a bomb explosion, he told the reporters.

Asked to elaborate further on Iran's stance towards Hamas and Islamic Jihad, President Rafsanjani said, Iran is all against terrorism in all forms. "We consider Hamas as a Palestinian movement which is struggling to liberate their country. This should not be abandoned. But acts of terrorism should not be supported. Acts of terrorism will not solve anything."

On the trip of a European Union delegation to Tehran on Wednesday, he said that Iran is for negotiations with EU. "Anybody who wants to have a dialog with us we are ready for it. But asking us to condemn the Palestinian struggle, we will not do this. It is the duty of any dignified person to support liberation struggle of any nation. We do not support acts of terrorism and violence.

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He added, "they do not need to take the trouble of taking a trip." He stressed that Iran is against terrorism but that Iran cannot see rights of Palestinians being ignored. He also said that Iran has not hampered the peace process.

As for question if there was no U.S. sanctions against Iran would the president support American investment in Iran, he said, "yes, we had economic contacts with U.S. and we had Conoco deal. Now they have dropped it and we have better alternatives."

More on U.S. allegations against Iran and Tehran's involvement in acts of terrorism, he said, "this is a propaganda ploy and I know they will use it again."

On the Egypt summit, he said the summit is sponsored by the U.S. and we are not hopeful and we see it in a propaganda framework. We cannot believe that people who support terrorism will fight terrorism.

The president added that Iran accepts the just and rightful struggle of Palestinians. He added that it is the duty of any Muslim to defend righteousness and oppose corrpution and destpotims. He stressed that definitely Iran is not going to serve the interests of Israel.

He added that Iran is against racial discrimination and that any government based on racial discrimination is not acceptable to Iran. He added that all Jews, Christians and Muslims should live together freely and all the displaced should return and choose their government.

On Iran's relations with other countries, the president made it clear that Iran is willing to have friendly relations with all countries with the exception of U.S. and Israel.

"We are ready to cooperate with any friendly Arab countries, Saudi Arabia in particular. But there are some countries which do not want such friendly relations [to] be established between Iran and other countries."

On relations with U.S. he said there is a precondition for re- establishment of realtions, as a gesture of goodwill the U.S. should release Iran's frozen assets. On effects of U.S. trade embargo against Iran, he said, "effect of U.S. trade embargo against Iran has practically been nill." He however added that the administration has taken the necessary precautionary measures such as stocking basic commodities. He added. "This was a mistake by U.S. and belittled the dignity of the U.S."

As for Tehran-Cairo relations, he said that both countries should work towards establishing better and full relations. He said cooperation between Iran and Egypt will be beneficial to the Arab world.

On the internal developments in the neighboring Iraq, President Rafsanjani said, "we do not want fragmentation of Iraq." He said that problems in Iraq are caused by the U.S.

Commenting on the issue of the apostate author, Salmam Rushdie, he said this is not a serious issue and that the Europeans themselves are talking too much about this issue and they do not want it to be solved. The edict of the late founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeyni, is in all Islamic books and and it is a legal Islamic edict. He stressed that the Europeans do not want it to be settled and that repeating the issue will not be beneficial.

Turning to domestic issues, the president said that he was satisfied with the last Friday Majles elections which he said were held freely. 25 million electorates participated in the elections. He added that he is optimistic that the future Majles will cooperate with the government. He said any change in the trend of the Majles will naturally have a great impact on policies.

On the two leading candidates in Tehran constituency, Ms. Fa'ezeh Hashemi and Majles Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri, the president said that there is no competition between the two. "Nateq-Nuri is a very dear friend of mine. Fa'ezeh is my daughter and she did not enter the elections for the competition," the president told the reporters.

On [the] economic situation, he said that based on statistics the purchasing power of the public has increased. He said that numerous giant infrastructure projects have been completed and achievements in all sectors of the economy have been outstanding. Meanwhile Iran has been host to millions of Afghan refugees alone.

He added that many employment opportunites have been generated in all sectors of the economy. He said development plans have been carried out in the remotest parts of the country, villages and towns. He stressed that Iran of today is totally different from what it was in the past. "Iran has truely become a big workshop."

He however, added that Iran suffers from some propaganda weakness inside and propaganda ploys from outside. He added that domestic talents and potentials are being tapped and utilized for the progress of the country, with remarkable results in infrastructural projects.

He added that friends of Iran should visit various parts of Iran to see the realities for themselves and progresses made in every village and town. He added that now every village has a health center, school and a mosque.

Asked to comment on rumors that a bill will be introduced to amend the constitution to extend his terms in office and whether he would favor such a change and re-election to office, the preisdent said, "no, I do not

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consider it to the interest of the country." He stressed that construction plans will continue in future.

"I hope that this will remain a rumor. If it is approved, I will not accept it," he told the press.

Iran: New Group's Statement on Elections

NC1003170096 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 22 Feb 96 p 7

["Text" of a statement by the Society to Defend the Values of the Islamic Revolution; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Since popular participation is one of the major pillars of the strength and stability of the divine system of the Islamic Republic, and the Majles is the most significant venue for the people's political participation, the Majles elections play a determining role in the fate of the country. The least bit of negligence in this vital issue can have unfavorable and even irreparable consequences. [passage omitted]

Our dear Islamic homeland is now in the process of reconstruction—something that should have begun in the very first years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution—so that our people could enjoy its fruits today. However, the all out aggression by the enemies of the revolution throughout the years of Sacred Defense [Iran-Iraq war] and the overt and covert support by the united front of arrogance for its domestic hirelings and the counterrevolutionary minigroups, as well as treacherous and pitiless capitalists and their supporters, and the supporters of so-called pro-Eastern and pro-Western cultures, temporarily interrupted and postponed the favorable fulfillment of the justice-seeking objectives of the Islamic system. But from the very first day that it pledged allegiance to the great Khomeyni, may his soul be sanctified, the selfless and devoted Iranian nation was determined to fulfill his lofty aspirations, which were the true manifestation of human and Islamic respect and dignity. And today it has pledged to the competent successor of Khomeyni, may his soul be sanctified, that it will continue the same divine and glorious path, and it is striving—by following him and leaning on the strong and valuable legacy of the Islamic Revolution—that is, the Constitution—to traverse this path left incomplete. Naturally, there is no source more capable of doing this than the Majles that, according to the sagacious Imam, may his soul be sanctified, is the outcome of the people's shouts of God is Great.

If we want to see the principles ruling the development programs be fulfilled as envisaged by the sagacious leader of the Islamic Revolution, and for divine values, social justice, self-sufficiency, and independence to be the outcomes of our development programs, it is the Majles that should deal with the legislative aspects and carefully supervise the correct and full implementation of the laws. Although many long steps have been taken by the government until now, the sensitivities of the current conditions, the overt onslaught by enemies from outside, and the silently creeping movement by their domestic followers, call for revolutionary and alert steps that are based on the genuine values of Islam to be taken. By refraining from reliance on aliens, we will prevent hasty actions in the economic, political, and cultural fields, so that the true example of religious rule that truly manifests a popular rule and is a vital necessity in the world today will be offered; and so that the long steps that the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken until now—an achievement both friends and foes admit—will continue. [passage omitted]

In its transition from the era of Sacred Defense to the era of reconstruction, Islamic Iran needs competent legislators and programmers who have proven their commitment to the aspirations of the Islamic Revolution both in word and deed. Those people are worthy of representing people characterized by religious zeal and revolutionary enthusiasm. They are in unison with the people. Today and always our system needs a Majles which can, by correctly understanding national and global necessities, rely on the genuine criteria of the Islamic Revolution and especially on its firm slogan—independence, freedom, and Islamic Republic—and thus, pave the way for the fulfillment of the objectives of the revolution.

Today, although the firm pillars of the Islamic Revolution and the system that emerged from this revolution are deeply rooted in the pure hearts of the people, who are responsible and devoted to the revolution—and their repeated allegiance toward their great leader is the clearest proof of this—we see facts that show some black hearts, filthy hands, and dirty tongues are trying to bitter the sweetness of freedom, independence, strength, and non-subserviency of the Muslim and revolutionary Iranians, which is so widely spoken about in the world, by resorting to satanic temptations.

Murmurs of separating religion from politics, liberalism, cultural licentiousness, and a comfortable life at a cost of economic dependence, compromise and reconciliation with the world-devourers, and dealing with them over the interests of the oppressed "particularly in the Palestinian problem" and, in short, isolating "revolutionary inclinations and basiji thought" under the deceptive label of "international coexistence!" or "civil moderation!" [quotation marks, exclamations as published] are all footprints of individuals and processes seeking to transform the revolution into dependence.

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We deeply believe that the transition from the current phase to achieve the favorable objectives of the system in the various economic, cultural, and social fields can only be achieved within the framework of the late Imam's lofty ideas and the sagacious and farsighted directives of the dear leader of the Islamic Revolution, far from restricted and factional tastes. Inconsistent and unstable policies in economic and social planning, nonmethodical emphasis on free economy; replacing social justice with comfort; deploying inefficient and uncommitted forces in management and specialized fields instead of committed and efficient forces with a revolutionary record; and not heeding the cultural onslaught and attaching importance to elements lacking an identity in the fields of culture and knowledge; are all stumbling blocks which the fifth Majles should seriously avoid.

Undoubtedly our country needs efficient, specialized, and precise programming. Inattentiveness in our policy-making and programming can only lead to chaos and waste of time and potential. Petty views cannot meet our revolutionary society's needs, in the same that the social model in the so-called developed world—be it pro-Eastern or pro-Western—cannot be a favorable pattern for us to adopt. Rhetorical solutions constitute the model for centralized state economic development similar to the one that existed in the former Eastern bloc. Also, economic solutions and advice that belong to the era of the Qajar dynasty cannot solve our problems.

The national economy will bear fruit only when it is based on the development of our national production and when—together with the people's true participation—monopolization is avoided and social justice and support for the oppressed becomes the pivot of development programs. True and favorable progress and development in our society can be made possible only under the aegis of the people's alert presence and by observing the principles and values of the Islamic Revolution.

Myself and a number of people who support the system, within the context of defending the Islamic Revolution's values on the basis of our canonical and revolutionary duties, by understanding and being sensitive toward the current needs of the system, and in following the recent statements by the esteemed leader of the Islamic Revolution on the need for all the people's efforts to strengthen the elections, consider it our duty to call on all the members of the dear and brave society of Islamic Iran who can legally participate in the elections to display an active, responsible, and extensive presence in their constituencies and to perform their important religious and national duty by participating in the fate of the country.

We believe that as long as differing and even conflicting political tastes do not deviate from Islamic and revolutionary principles, not only are they not harmful, but that their presence and participation in the political scene of the country is necessary and can be an effective element for offering a variety of views, the valuable outcome of which is rectifying views and promoting thought. On this basis, we believe that all the committed and revolutionary candidates should be assessed on the basis of their true personality, their views, and their performance and that the best should be sent to the Majles. For this reason, all the genuine and revolutionary processes should seriously refrain from deceiving the people and unintentionally destroying the atmosphere of the campaign. It is hoped that by reliance on God the almighty and with the help of the Imam of the Ages—may God hasten his advent—and by making use of the directives of the late Imam, may his soul be sanctified, and of the esteemed leader of the Islamic Revolution, His Eminence Ayatolah Khamene'i, we will carry out this religious, historic, and revolutionary duty as is fit for a Muslim and revolutionary nation. We have more to say on this and will discuss it with you in our future statements. [Signed] Mohmmad Mohammadi-Reyshahri

Iran: Interview Cites Tehran Mayor's Remarks on Candidacy

NC0803160896 Tehran SALAM in Persian 29 Feb 96 pp 1, 2

[Report on an "exclusive" interview with Gholam Hoseyn Karbaschi, mayor of Tehran, by an unidentified SALAM correspondent in Tehran; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Tehran Mayor, Gholam Hoseyn Karbaschi, who is one of the members of the Servants of Construction group answered questions on the fifth round of Majles elections.

In answer to a question on what groups and factions have been incorporated in the list of the Servants of Construction group, Karbaschi stated: All the groups that have something to say should participate in the Majles elections so that the differences of opinion can take a tangible form.

Regarding the Servants of Construction group's list, Karabaschi stated: In this faction, various individuals have been nominated as candidates and we should inform the people. We hope they (the people) accept our list, a comprehensive list in which all groups and schools of thought have been represented, as the Majles should not be the monopoly of a single group.

The Tehran mayor said that this mode of selecting candidates was "because we sensed our obligation to

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present a Majles to the people which can work for construction and in which all can participate. We (the Servants of Construction) do not intend to extricate the Majles from the monopoly of one group only to make it the monopoly of another group."

He added: All our efforts were geared to incorporating various tastes and preferences in our list. A number of the Tehran Militant Clergy Association [TMCA] members, some Tehran Militant Clerics Society [TMCS] members, and some specialists are included in the list and the fifth Majles will be more comprehensive than the fourth one.

The Tehran mayor then commented on the recent visit of his group to Qom and said: It was considered necessary to begin the process of familiarizing various personalities and elders in Qom with our stances and explaining the various issues pertaining to our group to them, in which we were successful. We have grand ayatollahs and religious figures in our country whose views the people follow.

In answer to the last question by SALAM, Karbaschi did not affirm or deny that he intended to contest the presidential elections and said: We cannot speak on this issue at this juncture as the law states that action can only be taken two months before the presidential elections.

Iran: Servants of Construction Candidates Threaten Resignation

LD0803135296 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 4 Mar 96 p 3

[Unattributed article: "Servants of Construction Candidates Threaten Resignation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The weekly BAHAR writes in its latest edition: "After the name of [Majles Speaker 'Ali Akbar] Nateq-Nuri was added to the candidates' list of the Servants of Construction, some of the influential candidates of the group threatened not to continue their participation in the elections. For instance, Mr. 'Abdollah Nuri announced his intention to discontinue his participation. But it seems the issue was resolved following advice from senior officials of the country."

In another news item, the weekly says that the certainty that Nateq-Nuri's name was on the Servants of Construction list caused surprise and unbelief among those connected to the group.

The weekly quotes a source close to the group as saying that the most possible approach of Servants of Construction to the above issue is to campaign extensively for the particular individuals who are not on both lists of Servants of Construction and the Militant Clergy Association; therefore no campaigning will be carried out for Nateq-Nuri, and people in Tehran will understand that there is no satisfaction with his name being on their list.

Comment one: We do not know how true the first part of the BAHAR news item is. Should it be true, the Servants of Construction were not forced to take this measure and highlight differences between themselves. As far as we know, the Militant Clergy Association had not suggested any name for the Servants of Construction list.

Comment two: However, the second part of the BAHAR news item regarding campaigning for the 20 candidates is clearly evident from some advertisements in the press and other places.

Iran: Islamic Republic Party Friends Urge Support for Rafsanjani

LD0903121396 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 5 Mar 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] On the eve of the fifth Majles elections, a group of the friends of the Islamic Republic Party [Jam'i az Yaran-e Hezb-e Jomhuri-e Eslami] have issued their third statement. This is the text of the statement:

[Passage omitted]

In view of the fact that various lists containing many suitable Majles election candidates have fortunately been published, we would like to invite our sympathizers to make sure that they cast their votes for all the permitted 30 candidates. They should select these from among the lists of candidates issued by the Militant Clergy Association, a group of the Servants of Construction, and finally the Society for the Defense of the Islamic Revolution Values. [passage omitted]

Ultimately, we want a Majles that, with inspiration from the guidelines of the esteemed imam and His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, enjoys an extraordinary might and spirit, on the basis of which it will be able to grasp complex world issues and adopt resolute decisions vis-a-vis global arrogance. We want it to be able to pass bills and laws which lend support to the great commander of construction, Ayatollah Hashemi-Rafsanjani, and at the same time can meet priorities concerning the creation of economic prosperity for the deprived strata, the development of science and culture, and the creation of a healthy social and moral atmosphere, all of which can speed up the process of development and bring about a stronger Islamic Iran.

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Iran: Candidate Examines Peoples' Role in Majles Elections

LD0903201196 Tehran SALAM in Persian 5 Mar 96 p 13

[Interview with Dr. Seyyed Mahmud Hoseyni, editor of SALAM's Educational Research Service and Fifth Majles Election candidate; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [SALAM] What is the role of the people in elections?

[Hoseyni] Everyone, especially political groups and factions, have confirmed and continue to confirm the importance of the role and position of the people in elections. However, the issue that is more important and fundamental than this confirmation is the perception and viewpoint that political factions have toward the people and their political rights; something which, unfortunately, is given less time and attention.

In the words of Martyr Motahhari: "One of the things on which the satisfaction of the public depends is the attitude which the government adopts toward the masses of the people and toward itself. Does it consider them to be slaves or serfs and consider itself to be the owner and proprietor? Or does it consider them as rights- holders and itself merely as a representative, trusted agent, or deputy [vakil]? One of the primary preconditions for gaining the trust and satisfaction of the people is for the government to admit that the people have true rights and that it should shun any kind of action suggesting a negation of their [the people's] sovereignty".

I believe that the essential and fundamental difference between the two important political factions or trends in the country is over this issue. One faction believes in distinguishing acceptable [maqbuliyat] from legitimate [mashru'iat] and considers that the people have no inherent political rights; whereas, for the people of our persuasion, we more or less unanimously agree with the statement by Motahhari: "That rights are always two-sided and a right becomes applicable if and when the right-holder performs the duties attached to his right" and we believe that faith in God is the underlying basis for the idea of justice and inherent rights for the people, rather than adhering to the view that belief in God cancels the right of the people to be sovereign.

[SALAM] What are the things that prevent disintegration [takhrib] in our society?

[Hoseyni] One can list a number of political, cultural, and economic things which are major contributors to the disintegration of a society. However, it would seem that the behavior of governments towards parties, newspapers and, especially, political personalities is the main reason behind the lack of enthusiasm in the people for political groups and organizations throughout our history; behavior that has planted the idea in people's minds that interfering in politics has no consequence other than trouble and onerous costs. This is why the country's authorities, especially the judiciary, have a grave and, at the same time, significant responsibility in removing this idea from people's minds by implementing the principles of the constitution and by adhering to them in the strictest possible sense.

[SALAM] What suggestions or ideas would you propose or do you consider to be necessary in order to attract a greater level of participation by the people in elections?

[Hoseyni] I will only refer to one point in reply to this question, that is, the presence in the electoral arena of political personalities, groups, and factions which enjoy the confidence of the people. Unfortunately, the performance of the authorities has not been very satisfactory in this regard because, first, extensive and systematic efforts have been made in the course of these years to isolate active political forces and factions and, second, things have been made very difficult for those personalities and factions which enjoy the trust of the people — it is natural that this is an undesirable trend. In order to shed light on this issue you can, for example, look at the performance of radio and television which are put solely at the disposal of the leaders of one political faction, from morning until night, until the last days before the election.

[SALAM] What is your assessment of the situation on the eve of the elections for the Fifth Majles?

[Hoseyni] On the whole and in general, things have not changed very much this time round and many of the candidates from this persuasion have been rejected throughout the country and their sphere of action has been severely limited. A great deal has already been said about this by the groups and personalities belonging to this persuasion.

Iran: Mashhad Officials Comment on Significance of Elections

LD0803141996 Tehran IRNA in English 1347 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mashhad, Khorasan Prov., March 8, IRNA — the 5th parliamentary elections is of high significance because of the role in would play in determining economic, political and cultural issues of the country, said a senior official here on Friday.

The leader's representative in this northeastern province Ayatollah Va'ez Tabasi, while casting his ballot at a polling booth, said the 5th Majles would enjoy a high

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status. Tabasi, also superintendent of the holy shrine of Imam Reza (a.s.), the 8th imam of the household of the prophet (peace be upon him), said that at a time when the global arrogance was trying to deal a blow on the Islamic system in Iran, people should, as their legal, political and national duty, have active presence in all scenes of the country.

He added that the Iranian nation enjoyed high political talents and vigilance to the effect that their ideological interests in Islam and the Islamic revolution had disappointed the enemies of Islam.

Meanwhile, former Friday prayers leader of Mashhad Ayatollah Sheykh 'Abolhasan Shirazi said that people's presence in the 5th parliamentary polls was indicative of their commitment to their religious duty. Ayatollah Shirazi said that the Iranian people from all walks of life were duty bound to make the oppressed and the sympathizers of the Islamic revolution throughout the world happy through their active participation in the elections.

There are 605 polling stations in Mashhad which have been open to voters since 08:00 a.m. (04:30 GMT).

Iran: Yazdi Hopes for Amendments To Some Clauses of Election Law

LD0803144996 Tehran IRNA in English 0928 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 8, IRNA — Head of the judiciary, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, here Friday stressed full observation of legal criteria in the fifth Majles elections.

Ayatollah Yazdi who cast his vote at one of the polling booths further said that he had followed up the issues relevant to the elections of the 270-seat Majles and that everything has gone well and orderly so far. He expressed hope that some clauses of the election law would be amended later to facilitate the activities of executive officials.

Meanwhile, Vice-President of the Experts Assembly Ayatollah Ebrahim Amini, and Hojjat ol-Eslam Seyyed Hasan Khomeyni, grandson of the late founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeyni, cast their votes in Qom and Tehran, respectively.

The prominent ulema, including Ayatollah Mohammad Fazel Lankarani, Ayatollah Naser Makarem Shirazi, Ayatollah 'Ali Meshkini, Ayatollah Baha'eddini, Ayatollah Yusof Sane'i, Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi and Ayatollah 'Abdolkarim Musavi-Ardebili also cast their ballots in the holy city of Qom this morning.

Iran: Qom's Ayatollah Amini Warns of 'Treason' Against Votes

LD0803134696 Tehran IRNA in English 1300 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Qom, Central Prov., March 8, IRNA — The substitute Friday prayers leader of Qom Ayatollah Amini called on executive officials overseeing the elections to take care of people's votes, adding that committing any treason against people's votes would be a big sin. Amini said that people, following the guidelines of founder of the Islamic Republic the late Imam Khomeyni and leader of the Islamic revolution Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, fulfilled their religious duty.

He expressed hope that officials in charge of monitoring the elections will, as in the past, consider God as a witness to their deeds while taking care of people's votes.

Iran: Rafsanjani Praises Participation in Majles Election

LD0903154796 Tehran IRNA in English 1513 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 9, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said here on Saturday [9 March] that great achievements of the Islamic Revolution in eradicating deprivation have formed golden pages in the record of the Islamic Republic.

In a meeting with members of the Central Council of Imam Khomeyni Relief Committee, President Rafsanjani said the allegiance of the people to the Islamic Republic is due to the same valuable services and the principled policies of the Islamic Republic.

The president appreciated people's massive turn-out for the fifth parliamentary elections on Friday and said participation in the polls which took place in an unprecedented well-disciplined manner, was the climax of the appreciation the people demonstrated for the Islamic Republic and the officials. This, he added, makes every conscience in the world to understand the magnificence of the event.

He said while holding elections in the most democratic countries entailed social and political crisis, the free elections in Iran in which every voters elected the candidates in total security and peace was an indication of freedom and high political understanding in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He stressed that except counterrevolutionaries, there were few people who might be dissatisfied with such a situation.

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On the government's performance to root out deprivation, he pointed to the allocation of considerable amount of annual budget to support the needy people. The government's programs and investment to eradicate deprivation, create job, boost production and self- sufficiency of the needy families has been among the infrastructural and successful accomplishments of the government and the Imam Khomeyni Relief Committee.

President Rafsanjani said that people living in the remote and deprived areas are very sincere and faithful to the Islamic revolution, adding that this was an indication of the services extended to them by the government and the Islamic system.

He lauded the services of the Imam Khomeyni Relief Committee.

650,000 students, 15,000 university students and 1,200 graduates from the needy families are under the protection of the Imam Khomeyni Relief Committee.

Iran: Tajik TV Correspondent Hails 'Democratic' Elections

LD0803141496 Tehran IRNA in English 1406 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 8, IRNA — A Tajik tv commentator now in Tehran to cover Majles elections, on Friday described the parliamentary polls in Iran as fully democratic.

The correspondent Ms. Shahla Akapirova told IRNA that during her three-week stay in Iran she has scrutinized the cultural, political and economic situation in the country. The Tajik correspondent, who visited a polling booth in Jamaran, northern Tehran Friday morning, added that enthusiasm shown by the Iranian people for contributing to the country's affairs was very interesting for her.

She commented that the presence of a large number of people in Jamaran polling booth might be partly due to their spiritual link with the late Imam Khomeyni, who lived in this district of the city.

The visiting Tajik tv commentator also said she had a special feeling in Jamaran which could not be expressed by words.

Iran: Daily Views Former Speaker's Point of View on Elections

LD0803224796 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 6 Mar p 2

[Unattributed article: "The Points of View of Messrs Rafsanjani, Nateq-Nuri, and Karrubi on the Majles Elections: The Point of View of Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Mehdi Karrubi"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Mehdi Karrubi, speaker of the third Majles, believes that the appearance of political parties in the country will further strengthen the Majles, ensure the survival of the system, and give people a sense of satisfaction and enthusiasm. He says: Strong parties can act as deterrents to offenses and can contribute to the development of healthy competition.

According to Mr. Karrubi, the general and long-term interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran should be borne in mind in the elections and specific tendencies and proclivities should be avoided in favor of preparing the ground for the active participation of all forces loyal to the system and committed to the constitution. Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Karrubi believes that more serious attention should be paid to the question of the elections and competition so that the grounds could be prepared for able, deserving, and specialized individuals to enter the Majles.

Regarding the likely composition of the deputies in the fifth Majles, he said: I think the next Majles will be more balanced than the last and will lose some of its uniformity. There is also the possibility that individuals who are not affiliated to one faction or another will find their way into the Majles.

Iran: Weekly Criticizes Radio, TV for Biased Election Propaganda

LD0903070296 Tehran 'ASR-E MA in Persian 6 Mar 96 p1

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The portrayal, under various pretexts, by the Voice and Vision of candidates belonging to the traditional right, has sparked protests by the country's political and media circles, but it has not had any kind of effect on relevant officials and authorities; and the story goes on. [passage omitted] When the Voice and Vision is faced with such a wave of protests it only changes the line of its propaganda.

These days the Voice and Vision is repeatedly broadcasting the imam's warning that: The clergy should not be undermined, thereby propagating the Militant Clergy Association [Jame'e-ye Ruhaniyat-e Mobarez] and the newspaper 'RESALAT'. Therefore, in a cunning way, the radio and TV continues its propaganda by taking advantage of the similarity which exists in the use of the word "clergy" in the imam's remarks, and the name of the Militant Clergy Association. [passage omitted]

Setting aside the appearances and political slogans, what is threatening the clergy is the traditional right

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faction which, more than any other faction, pretends to sympathize with the clergy. It comes on the scene with a slogan of support for the clergy and blames its political opponents of opposing the clergy. By committing such a selfish and egoistic act, it portrays the worst kind of image for the clergy in society. This itself is one of the reasons for those interested in protecting the dignity and status of the clergy to join the campaign to stop the egoistic rule of the traditional right.

Iran: Weekly Bemoans Editor's Rejection as Election Candidate

LD0903185896 Tehran 'ASR-E AM in Persian 6 Mar 96 pp 4, 5

[FBIS Translated Text] The Majles election is one of the most fundamental, important, and wide-ranging opportunities for the participation of the people to decide their fate and that of the administration of the country. The nature of such an election requires all those whose are suitable [candidates] to be able to present themselves to the people. It is obvious that any imposition of a factional or group tendency at the level of supervision which deprives those who are suitable from being candidates, thereby deprives the people from voting for them, violates the right of people's participation in elections, violates the republican nature of the system and, in a word, violates the constitution.

The election to the Fifth Majles started well enough. Officials talked about holding sound and free elections and humbly called on everyone to take part in them. But one only had to wait for the time for action to arrive, as experience has shown, for all those slogans and grand displays to become clearer, showing that when it comes to the question of power, justice and the law are not worth anything. We are not going to talk about the rejections of candidacy based on spite or because the candidate belonged to a particular line, even though these were in themselves unjust and made up by political groups who want everything for themselves [tamamat khah] and who on the outside take up the slogan of freedom but quietly, by putting their people into executive and supervisory positions, attack and destroy their rivals. However, these rejections did have some sort of a legal cover. These rejections are because of the mystery that surrounds the vetting procedure — and the vetting system is, in itself, legal. The nature of this set of rejections is clear to everyone. Our discussion is about those cases of rejection that do not even fall into line with the laws and regulations made up by the traditional rightist faction inside and outside the Majles over the past four years and which are in open violation of the law. The rejection of the candidacy of our editor is one of these. The election board for Tehran Constituency rejected the candidacy of Engineer Mohsen Armin without giving any reasons — justified or otherwise. His candidacy had been approved by the board supervising the eligibility of candidates for the Fourth Majles. He complained to the [Tehran] province's election supervisory board and the complaint was registered and filed by the board as complaint No. 371, dated 14 March 1996 [date as published]. But he did not receive any reply despite numerous enquiries and despite reaching the end of the legal time limit [as published; presumably the deadline for investigating complaints].

Meanwhile, interior ministry officials announced officially that all the complaints had been investigated and the results announced to all who had lodged complaints by Wednesday 21 February. Therefore, the opportunity to lodge another complaint to the central supervisory board was taken away from him. In the end, when the final list of approved candidates was announced, the rejection of his candidacy was finalized.

ASR-E MA's editor telephoned the Guardian Council to find out the reason for being rejected by the province's supervisory board. He was told: You changed your mind therefore a review of your eligibility has no basis. By now the situation was getting interesting. Following further enquiries, it became evident that the complaint form to the [province's] supervisory board had been removed from his file and brother Armin had been included in the list of those plaintiffs who had changed their mind and the latter list was sent to the Guardian Council. ASR-E MA's editor followed up the story. He wrote to the Guardian Council calling for an investigation and saying if the story about changing his mind and interfering with his file was true, his eligibility to be a candidate should be approved as compensation; and if his eligibility had been rejected, the real reason for the rejection of his candidacy should be announced.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Abbasi-Fard, one of the legal experts in the Guardian Council, after taking note of the fact that the province's election supervisory board had received the complaint and after reading the editor's letter, responded thus: "I have studied your file and you are right. There is no letter in your file indicating that you had changed your mind. It seems as though a mistake has been made. In my opinion, your candidacy should be approved legally, unless other reasons are presented to reject your candidacy — which is a separate matter. I will raise this issue, even though time has passed and a review board may not sit again."

ASR-E MA's editor responded: "Surely you do not expect me to forgo my legal right and forget the fact that my file was tampered with." Hojjat ol-Eslam Abbasi-

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Fard replied: "I have raised this issue and announced my own opinion."

Finally, after another day had passed, the editor of ASR-E MA received the following message: "The issue was raised and they said it is too late and we have no choice but to listen to the views of the supervisory board."

In other words, his eligibility to stand as a candidate was rejected because someone at the supervisory board committed the crime of tampering with his file!

Iran: People's Enthusiasm Seen as Sign of 'Political Maturity'

LD1003110496 Tehran IRNA in English 0704 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 10, IRNA — The enthusiasm displayed by the people, particularly women, showed the degree of political maturity that Iran has reached and the role of the people in the democratic process, said Kotb al-Arabi [name as received], a correspondent of the egyptian AL-SHA'B magazine.

In an interview here with the English daily TEHRAN TIMES printed Sunday, he added that the people's massive turnout in the recently concluded Majlis polls was primarily due to their awareness of the many challenges that the Islamic Republic is facing today.

Underlining the fairness with which the voting was conducted, he stressed that he personally did not witness any irregularity or fraudulent casting of votes.

Al-Arabi said the election focused on two issues, namely, "developmental" and "social", each being the main platform of the two dominant political factions.

Asked whether the issues crystallized in the candidates' platform or in their political affiliation, he replied that within the political groupings in Iran, the candidates sufficiently distinguished themselves in the issues they stood for, emphasizing that the people's participation was due to their awareness of issues and not because of the personalities they supported.

Concluding the interview, the Egyptian journalist expressed hope that election results would work in favor of a better life for the Iranian nation.

AL-SHA'B is a biweekly Cairo magazine with a weekly circulation of 70,000.

Iran: Commentary Sees Elections as Success for Islamic Republic

NC0903090996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 9 Mar 96

[Commentary by News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] The elections for the Fifth Majles have been held throughout the country. These elections—which were an arena of healthy competition among all strata of Iranian society due to the active participation of various personalities, groups, political formations, and guilds—went beyond mere rivalry and became a stage for the manifestation of the grandeur of the Islamic Revolution and the national power of the Iranian people.

Initial estimates are that despite the extensive propaganda by some foreign media over the past few weeks and their efforts to portray the elections as undemocratic and to instill pessimism in the people, the Iranian people went to the polls with unprecedented fervor and zeal yesterday. In addition, the district-by-district composition of the participants in the cities and on a national level was evidence of the participation of new social forces in the elections and the generally high enthusiasm for yesterday's elections.

This dazzling growth in the political participation of the Iranian people indicates an increase in society's political maturity and is also eloquent testimony to an accelerated trend of growth and progress in the social and economic foundations of society, which is why the high-pressure propaganda of some of the foreign media in the past few weeks and their efforts to convey the impression that economic problems would prevent the people from voting in the elections were proved futile yesterday. This proved that the Iranian people assess the issues pertaining to the Islamic Revolution—including the attainment of freedom and independence and the problems that stem from pressure by the powers of world arrogance—within the framework of the needs of the revolution and then react appropriately.

The participation of the people in yesterday's elections are in fact a reflection of the Iranian people's realistic assessment of the needs and objectives of the Islamic Revolution. It was so dazzling that some of the special correspondents sent by various Western news agencies and publications were forced to admit to it despite their longstanding record of distorting the image of the Islamic Revolution. All in all, it appears that political maturity and the revolutionary commitment of the Iranian people to safeguard the Islamic Revolution's aspirations

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and their awareness of the necessity for strengthening the politico-economic foundations of society to withstand hardships and foreign threats brought them side by side once again. The Fifth Islamic Majles elections were thus a manifestation of the national power of the Iranian people and of the aspirations of the Islamic Revolution that they cherish.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Spokesman Condemns Bomb Attacks in Israel

BK0803142696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has urged all parties in the Middle East to preserve their commitment to the peace process, which offers the only realistic hope of ensuring a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace. An official spokesman said in Islamabad today that they view the recent resurgence of violence in the region with great concern and hope that it would not derail or undermine the peace process.

Commenting on the recent suicide bomb attacks in Israel, the spokesman said the Government of Pakistan condemns all forms of terrorism regardless of the source or the victim.

Pakistan: Prime Minister Comments on Current U.S. Relations

BK1103095796 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 11 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Zaffarulah Khan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad - Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has defended her government's decision not to contest Sheikh Rashid's case in the Lahore High Court, where the convicted MNA [Member of National Assembly] was in appeal against the verdict of the Special Court for Suppression of Terrorist Activities.

"We haven't extended this gesture because the United States State Department's report on human rights talked about this case", she maintained and recalled her government's earlier gestures extended to Syed Ittikhar Gilani in his disqualification case and to the people involved in of Punjab Assembly secretary Habibullah's abduction in 1993.

Talking to journalists in her chamber Sunday, Premier Bhutto, however, said that her country was serious about sorting out concerns with the United States, but her reference was to Washington's hue and cry about Pakistan's alleged nuclear related import from China. She said "I have inquired from the country's nuclear establishment and they have denied any such import from China".

The premier maintained, "We want to settle this issue with the United States through talks, and urged the Clinton administration to share its information," as we are serious to settle the issue. We don't want to deteriorate our relations with the United States", she continued.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto reiterated that Pakistan's nuclear programme was peaceful and it had not decided to conduct any nuclear test, unless" our survival or territorial integrity is threatened. Ours' decision is not based on compulsions, but it is a voluntary reached self-restraint," she pointed out.

The prime minister, however, maintained that the Indian move to go for nuclear test would deteriorate situation in the region. She also described the reported Indian preparations for nuclear test as an election stunt and ruled out chances of any immediate was with India. She even didn't own her statement fearing war between India and Pakistan carried by Sunday newspapers. "Tension is there and it will remain there until the Kashmir dispute is resolved", she maintained.

About Sheikh Rashid's case, Bhutto said the world could not criticise any country's normal judicial system and in Pakistan there were no military courts operative. When asked if her government was thinking to extend a similar gesture to Mian Shahbaz Sharif, the premier said," He (Shabaz) was under trial, whereas Sheikh Rashid had gone through his half term of imprisonment."

The prime minister was also jubilant over the success of her, "look East policy", in her recently concluded visit to two East Asian countries. "We have signed worth $1.2 billion trade and investment agreements with Indonesia and "our trade with Indonesia will be on mutual-trade basis, they will be giving us N-250 planes and will be getting sugar and cement plants from Pakistan."

Defending her government's electoral reforms package, she said, "as Muslim we are struggling to protect the rights of weak and minorities are one of them." She said, joint electorate was the vision of Quaid-i-Azam polluted by military dictator, Ziaul Haq, who divided the nation on sectarian ethnic and linguistic basis". Our electoral reform, she said, won't repeat the experience of 1990's rigging.

The prime minister once again reiterated her offer of dialogue to the opposition on common points. About the 8th Amendment, Bhutto said, "it has already been diluted in bits and pieces". "After 1993's restoration of

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a dissolved assembly dismissal of yet another assembly has become difficult", she claimed.

But if the opposition is concerned about or benefit from the 8th amendment's repeal, we can enforce its annulment from the next parliamentary term, she advocated. Bhutto sounded confident over winning the next elections on the basis of government's performance, and maintained that if hypothetically speaking the Nawaz league won the next election, it won't be able to elect its own president because of PPP [Pakistan People's Party] future majority in the Senate. "They (opposition) should say good-bye to politics of movements, "nijat" and agitations and think in favour of the nation", she added.

Regarding the Karachi situation, prime minister said that people of Pakistan were fed up of terrorism and we had asked the Mohajir Qaumi Movement to give peace at least a six months chance in Karachi and integrate itself to the main stream politics. "The government is a temporary reality and we want to live in people's hearts and history", she added.

Bhutto also advocated that the next century would be at Asian century as economic growth rate was unprecedented in East Asia and out of five billion world population three billion are living in Asia. "For the first time in the history, economic resources are shifting to the East, the East has more territory and above all it is on the path of real economic growth", she maintained and said that Pakistan was also the seventh emerging world capital market.

She also defended her government's economic wisdom in containing inflation in the country, thus checking the price-hike. When a journalists pinpointed delay in the announcement of the 6th Wage Board award and denial of salaries in many papers she asked the law minister, Prof. N.D. Khan to take up the issue at Monday's (today) cabinet meeting. She assured newsmen that her government would do whatever it could do within prescribed law for the betterment of journalists.

Pakistan: Bhutto Says Nuclear Program 'Peaceful,' Denies PRC Acquisition

OW1003162396 Beijing XINHUA in English 1549 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, March 10 (XINHUA) — Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said here today that Pakistan will not conduct any nuclear test but will carry on with its peaceful nuclear program.

Talking to newsmen in her chamber at the Parliament House, Benazir Bhutto said, "We have a clear policy about our peaceful nuclear program and will stick to it unless threatened."

"However, we don't feel there is any threat to Pakistan's security presently," she added.

Nevertheless, she expressed concern over the reports that India will conduct a nuclear test.

"It could have serious consequences," she said.

Some US officials had accused India and Pakistan of preparing for nuclear tests this year.

Replying to a question about accusations from the US that Pakistan had obtained ring-magnets from China, Bhutto said, "We have checked with our people and they have denied obtaining any such items."

"We have asked the US to give us more information in this regard," she added.

She said, "We want to solve this issue as we have good relations both with the US and China and don't want to affect them."

Responding to another question, Bhutto denied that there was some threat of war with India.

However, she said there was tension between the two because of the pending issue of Kashmir.

Pakistan: Bhutto Denies Plan for Nuclear Test, Importing Ring Magnets

BK1003163696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said that Pakistan has no plans for a nuclear test, as our program is for peaceful purposes and will remain so till there is danger to survival and security of the country. Talking to newsmen at her chamber in the Parliament House this evening, she categorically said Pakistan's peaceful program is voluntary on the basis of self- restraint and in line with our sovereign decision. She said Pakistan has expressed concern about reports of Indian nuclear test. She said India has not carried out the second test so far and pointed out that there could be delay in the same or there is talk of such a test because of the election year in that country.

To a question, she said Pakistan has not imported ring magnets from China, and the government has checked this at our end. She said Pakistan wanted to sort out the issue of ring magnets in cooperation with China and the United States. So far we have not been provided any information by the United States about the basis of their report.

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The prime minister again extended an offer to the leader of the opposition to sit with them for the repeal of the Eighth Amendment [giving discretionary powers of president to dismiss federal government]. She said this decision could be effective from the next elections.

About electoral reforms proposal, Ms. Benazir Bhutto said a comprehensive program has been given for this purpose, including computerization of electoral lists, transparent ballet boxes, reduction of expenses by about 50 percent with simultaneous holding of elections, as well as a ban on hoardings and banners.

Ms. Benazir Bhutto said the late military dictator was instrumental in creating sectarian and ethnic tension, while her government was working for the unity of the country. She said Altaf Group will have to give up the path of terrorism in which 2,000 civilians were killed in addition to 250 policemen and 175 PPP [Pakistan People's Party] workers.

About the price hike, she said the rate of inflation during the PPP government is less than in the days of its predecessor. She hoped it will brought down to 9 percent by June this year.

Pakistan: First Indigenously Developed Nuclear Reactor Completed

BK1003100096 Karachi DAWN in English 7 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Ashraf Mumtaz]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore, March 6 — Pakistan has completed its first 50-megawatt multi-purpose nuclear power reactor made entirely by Pakistani scientists and engineers.

Set up near Khushab in the Punjab, the reactor is ready for fuelling, Dawn learnt through competent sources here on Wednesday. A decision about when to operate the project will be taken by the government.

The reactor will be run by a special kind of fuel which has also been produced locally, the sources say.

Pakistan already has a 137-mw nuclear power plant in Karachi which was set up in cooperation with Canada. However, Canada had stopped supplying fuel for this plant (KANUPP) in the 70s after which Pakistan's experts developed a local fuel for this project. This plant is being run on local fuel since then.

Yet another plant is being established at Chashma with China's cooperation. The 300-mw plant (CHASHNUPP) is expected to become operational by the end of 1998.

It is a light water reactor using low-enriched uranium. It will work under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

Pakistan is also making some parts for the CHASNUPP locally which will further widen national experience in this field.

According to sources the Khushab plant will also produce isotopes and enable Pakistan to export them. At present, the country has to import isotopes to meet requirements in various fields.

The plant will also produce silica for use in solar energy.

A 5-mw research reactor (PARR I) was also set up at the Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology, Nilore. It was upgraded a few years ago. PARR-II is also working in the same premises and is open to international inspection.

Pakistan, it may be pointed out, had prepared a 20-year plan for production of nuclear energy within the country. However, it could not be adhered to because of international pressures and other hindrances.

Had the plan been followed, Pakistan would have attained capability to make one reactor after every few years after the year 2000.

Pakistan: Bhutto Comments on Outcome of Visits to Brunei, Indonesia

BK1003154096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 10 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto returned to Islamabad last night after a five-day official visit to Brunei and Indonesia.

The prime minister said in a statement that she held useful talks with the leaders of these two countries and explained Pakistan's investment friendly climate. She invited entrepreneurs and businessmen from the two countries to invest and trade with Pakistan. She particularly highlighted the large, trained work force and other facilities available for investors in Pakistan.

The prime minister said Indonesia and Brunei have similar concerns regarding regional peace and security. She was confident that Pakistan's position has been placed in a better perspective as a result of these visits. She explained to the leaders of Brunei and Indonesia the current security situation in South Asia, India's military buildup in occupied Kashmir, and the threat that India's nuclear and missile programs pose to the region. She said the leaders of the two countries were sympathetic and responsive toward Pakistan's concerns. The prime minister said she emphasized that there could be no

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genuine rapprochement between Pakistan and India until New Delhi allows the people of Jammu and Kashmir to exercise the right of self-determination.

Ms. Bhutto said she was sure that Pakistan's relations with the two Muslim countries will be further strengthened as a result of these visits.

In addition to holding in-depth talks with the leaders of Brunei and Indonesia during her visits, the prime minister addressed the business community in the two countries to seek foreign investment in Pakistan.

Pakistan: 'Most Dreaded' Altaf Group Terrorist Killed in Karachi

BK1103063296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0600 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A spokesman of the Rangers said in Karachi this morning that Naim Sheri, the most dreaded terrorist of the Altaf Group, met his end early Monday, according to the ASSOCIATED PRESS OF PAKISTAN. The spokesman said Naim Sheri, along with one of his accomplices, was killed in an encounter with the Rangers in Gulshan-i-Iqbal. Four soldiers of the Rangers were also wounded in this encounter.

Pakistan: Indian Troops Fire on Crowd in Azad Kashmir; 1 Killed

BK0803162096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A spokesman of the Ministry of Defense said in Rawalpindi today that the Indian troops resorted to unprovoked firing on the people who were gathering to offer Juma'h [Friday] prayers in a mosque in village Madarpur near Hajira in Azad Kashmir this afternoon. The Indian troops used automatic weapons targeting the innocent people and as a result, a 12-year-old boy was killed and another nine persons were injured seriously. The firing stopped for a while but when the people tried to retrieve the dead body and the injured persons, the Indian troops resumed the firing and another few people were injured, the spokesman said. It may be recalled that the Indian troops had fired rockets on a mosque in forward Kahuta few weeks ago, killing a number of innocent people. Our Muzaffarabad representative says the injured have been admitted to hospital in Rawala Kot.

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir prime minister, Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan, has strongly condemned the firing of the Indian troops and termed it as a cowardly act.

Pakistan: British MP's Offer To Mediate on Kashmir Issue

BK0903112496 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0500 GMT 9 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Two members of the British parliament, Sir Michael Marshall and Mr. Tom Cox have strongly condemned the massive human rights violations in occupied Kashmir. Talking to newsmen in Peshawar yesterday, they said the British Government is very much concerned about the human rights violations in the held valley and the tension created by the Kashmir issue in the region.

Answering a question, the two British parliamentarians said their country is ready to play a mediatory role between Pakistan and India for easing tension in the region and seeking a solution to the Kashmir issue.

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